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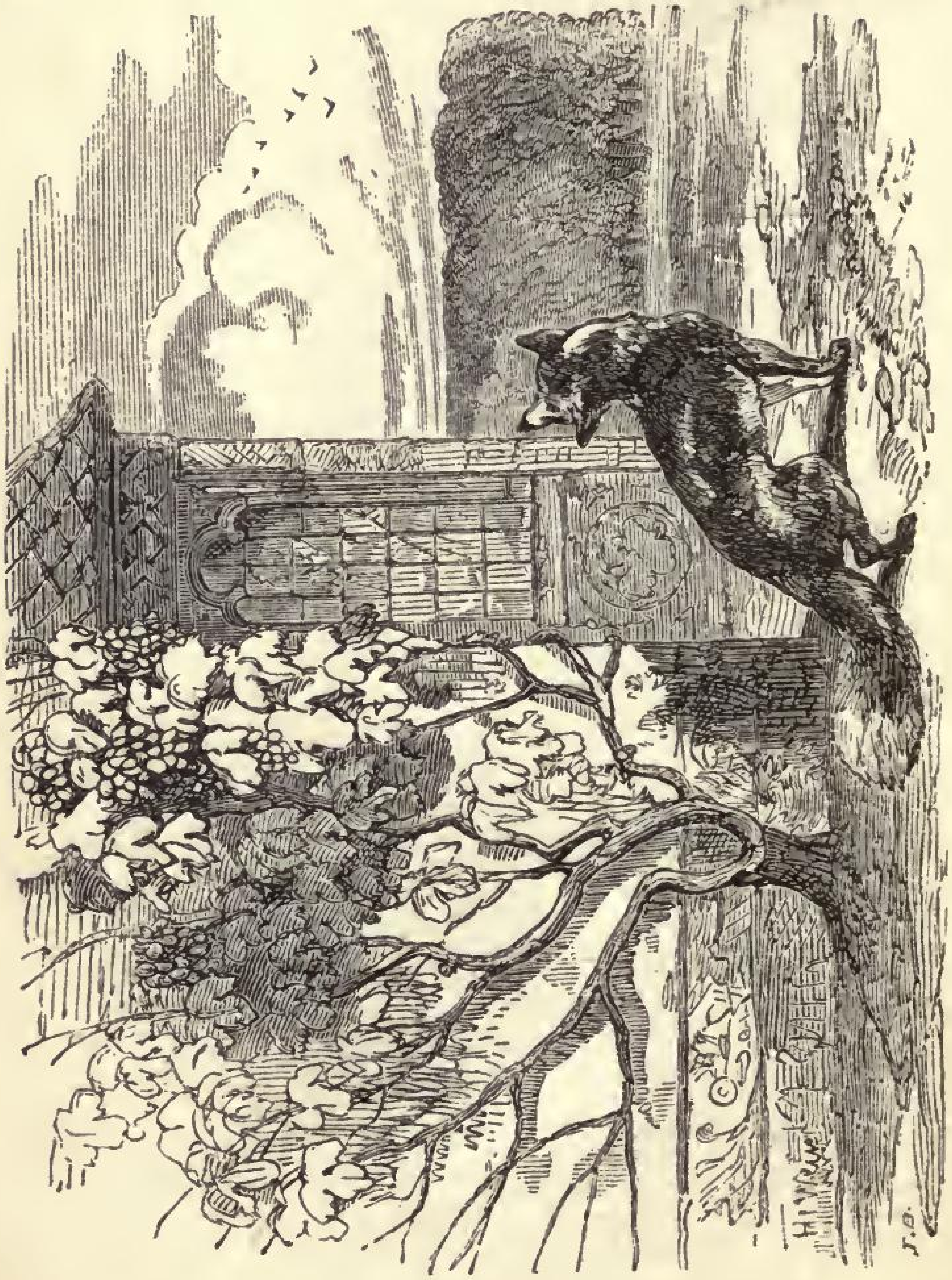

P. 11.

Aesopus.

THE

FABLES OF ÆSOP;

WITH

Instructive Applications,

AND THIRTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS FROM DESIGNS BY
HARRISON WEIR.

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CONTENTS.

FABLE.		PAGE.
1.	The Fox and the Grapes	11
2.	The Man and his Two Wives	11
3.	The Frogs desiring a King	13
4.	The Vain Jackdaw	14
5.	The Goat and the Lion	14
6.	The Lion and other Beasts	15
7.	The Wolf and the Crane	16
8.	The Stag looking into the Water	16
9.	The Fowler and the Lark	18
10.	The Two Bitches	18
11.	The Proud Frog	19
12.	The Fox and the Stork	20
13.	The Eagle and the Fox	21
14.	The Boar and the Ass	22
15.	The Frogs and the Fighting Bulls	23
16.	The Kite and the Pigeons	24
17.	The Wolf and the Lamb	25
18.	The Stag in the Ox-stall	28
19.	The Dog and the Wolf	29
20.	The Lamb brought up by a Goat	30
21.	The Peacock's Complaint	31
22.	The Cock and the Jewel	32
23.	The Viper and the File	33
24.	The Cock and the Fox	34
25.	The Man and his Wooden God	35
26.	The Mountains in Labour	36
27.	The Ant and the Fly	36

M317506

FABLE.		PAGE.
28.	The Old Hound	38
29.	The Sick Kite	39
30.	The Hares and the Frogs	39
31.	The Lion and the Mouse	40
32.	The Fatal Marriage	41
33.	The Dog in the Mauger	42
34.	The Horse and the Stag	45
35.	The Country Mouse and the City Mouse	46
36.	The Mouse and the Weasel	48
37.	The Belly and the Members	49
38.	The Lark and her Young Ones	50
39.	The Nurse and the Wolf	51
40.	The Tortoise and the Eagle	52
41.	The Wind and the Sun	52
42.	The Ass in the Lion's Skin	53
43.	The Frog and the Fox	54
44.	The Mischievous Dog	55
45.	Jupiter and the Camel	56
46.	The Travellers and the Bear	56
47.	The Bald Knight	57
48.	The Two Pots	58
49.	The Shepherd's Boy	58
50.	The Oak and the Reed	61
51.	The Fox and the Tiger	62
52.	The Lion and the Four Bulls	63
53.	The Thieves and the Cock	63
54.	The Forester and the Lion	64
55.	The Satyr and the Traveller	65
56.	Hercules and the Carter	66
57.	The Man and his Goose	67
58.	The Wanton Calf	68
59.	The Leopard and the Fox	69
60.	The Cat and the Fox	70
61.	The Partridge and the Cocks	71
62.	The Hunted Beaver	72
63.	The Thunny and the Dolphin	73
64.	The Hawk and the Nightingale	73
65.	The Horse and the Loaded Ass	74
66.	The Old Man and Death	77
67.	The Lion in Love	78

FABLE.		PAGE.
68.	The Lioness and the Fox	79
69.	The Stag and the Fawn	80
70.	The Young Man and the Swallow	81
71.	The Angler and the Little Fish	82
72.	The Ass and the Lion Hunting	83
73.	The Sensible Ass	84
74.	The Boasting Traveller	84
75.	The Brother and Sister	85
76.	The Collier and the Fuller	86
77.	The Fox and the Vizor-Mask	87
78.	The Two Frogs	87
79.	The Covetous Man	88
80.	The Eagle, the Cat, and the Sow	89
81.	The Dog and the Shadow	90
82.	The Lion and the Frog	93
83.	The Fir-tree and the Bramble	94
84.	The Bull and the Goat	95
85.	The Fowler and the Blackbird	95
86.	Jupiter and Pallas	96
87.	The Fox and the Bramble	97
88.	The Cat and the Mice	98
89.	The Fox and the Countryman	98
90.	A Man bit by a Dog	99
91.	Fortune and the Boy	99
92.	The Mule	100
93.	The Fox and the Ape	101
94.	The Mole and her Dam	102
95.	The Fox and the Boar	102
96.	The Old Woman and the Empty Cask	103
97.	The Fox and the Crow	104
98.	The Owl and the Grasshopper	107
99.	The One-eyed Doe	108
100.	The River Fish and the Sea Fish	109
101.	Æsop at Play	110
102.	The Jackdaw and the Pigeons	110
103.	The Sow and the Bitch	111
104.	The Sparrow and the Hare	112
105.	Cæsar and the Slave	113
106.	The Sheep-Biter	114
107.	The Thief and the Dog	115

FABLE.		PAGE.
108.	The Harper	116
109.	The Two Crabs	117
110.	The Thief and the Boy	117
111.	Mercury and the Woodman	118
112.	The Creaking Wheel	119
113.	The Serpent and the Man	120
114.	The Kid and the Wolf	123
115.	The Judicious Lion	124
116.	The Wood and the Clown	125
117.	The Wolf, the Fox, and the Ape	125
118.	Jupiter and the Ass	126
119.	The Boy and his Mother	127
120.	The Wolves and the Sick Ass	128
121.	The Ant and the Grasshopper	129
122.	The Ass, the Lion, and the Cock	130
123.	The Ape and the Fox	131
124.	The Ass and the Little Dog	132
125.	The Birds, the Beasts, and the Bat	133
126.	The Bear and the Bee-hives	134
127.	The Cock and the Fox	134
128.	The Cat and the Cock	135
129.	The Wolves and the Sheep	136
130.	The Dog and the Sheep	139
131.	The Hawk and the Farmer	140
132.	Death and Cupid	141
133.	The Dove and the Ant	142
134.	The Eagle and the Crow	142
135.	The Envious Man and the Covetous	143
136.	The Fox and the Lion	144
137.	The Geese and the Cranes	144
138.	The Horse and the Ass	145
139.	The Husbandman and his Sons	146
140.	The Old Lion	147
141.	The Lion, the Tiger, and the Fox	148
142.	The Fox and the Sick Lion	149
143.	The Mice in Council	150
144.	The Lion, the Ass, and the Fox	151
145.	The Horse and the Lion	152
146.	The Old Man and his Sons	155
147.	The Old Woman and her Maids	156

FABLE.		PAGE.
148.	The Falconer and the Partridge	157
149.	The Porcupine and the Snakes	157
150.	The Peacock and the Magpie	158
151.	The Parrot and his Cage	159
152.	The Fowler and the Ringdove	160
153.	The Sow and the Wolf	161
154.	The Husbandman and the Stork	162
155.	The Peacock and the Crane	163
156.	The Countryman and the Snake	164
157.	The Swallow and other Birds	165
158.	The Trumpeter taken Prisoner	165
159.	The Hare and the Tortoise	166
160.	The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing	167
161.	The Wolf and the Kid	168
162.	The Young Man and his Cat	171
163.	The Ass eating Thistles	172
164.	The Fox without a Tail	172
165.	The Bees, the Drones, and the Wasp	173
166.	The Fox in the Well	174
167.	The Fox and the Wolf	175
168.	The Frog and the Mouse	176
169.	The Man and the Weasel	177
170.	Æsop and the Impertinent Fellow	177
171.	The Hart and the Vine	178
172.	The Drunken Husband	179
173.	The Blackamoor	180
174.	The Travellers	181
175.	The Fisherman	181
176.	Mercury and the Carver	182
177.	The Crow and the Pitcher	185
178.	The Fox and the Ass	186
179.	The Hen and the Swallow	187
180.	The Dog invited to Supper	187
181.	Jupiter and the Herdsman	188
182.	The Fighting Cocks	189
183.	The Young Men and the Cook	190
184.	The Jackdaw and the Sheep	191
185.	The Ploughman and Fortune	192
186.	The Ape and her Two Young Ones	192
187.	The Shepherd turned Merchant	193

FABLE.		PAGE.
188.	The Young Man and the Lion	195
189.	The Hen and the Fox	196
190.	The Man and the Gnat	197
191.	The Deer and the Lion	197
192.	The Gardener and his Dog	198
193.	The Fox and the Goat	201
194.	The Raven and the Serpent	202
195.	The Fox and the Hedgehog	202
196.	The Master and the Scholar	203
197.	The Stone and the Man	204
198.	The Eagle and the Ring	204
199.	The Sea and the Rivers	205
200.	The only Wise Man	206
201.	Æsop and his Fellow-servants	207
202.	The Tongues	207
203.	The Locusts and Grasshopper	208
204.	The Wood and the Sea	209
205.	The Mouse and the Frog	209
206.	The Widow and Widower	210
207.	The Hare, the Eagle, the Hornet, and Jupiter	210
208.	The Husbandman and Asses	211
209.	The Jealous Cock	213
210.	The Sow and her Young Ones	214
211.	The Snuff-box and the Spectacles	214

ÆSOP'S FABLES.

I.—THE FOX AND THE GRAPES.

A fox, very hungry, chanced to come into a vineyard, where hung branches of charming ripe grapes, but nailed up to a trellis so high, that he leaped till he quite tired himself without being able to reach one of them. At last, "Let who will take them," says he, "they are but green and sour so I'll even let them alone."

The Application.—This Fable is a good reprimand to a parcel of vain coxcombs in the world, who, because they would never be thought to be disappointed in any of their pursuits pretend a dislike to everything which they cannot obtain There is a strange propensity in mankind to this temper, and there are numbers of grumbling malcontents in every different faculty and sect in life. The discarded statesman, considering the corruption of the times, would not have any hand in the administration of affairs for all the world. The country squire damns a court life, and would not go cringing and creeping to a drawing-room for the best place the king has in his disposal. A young fellow being asked how he liked a celebrated beauty, by whom all the world knew he was despised, answered, "she had a stinking breath." How insufferable is the pride of this poor creature man who would stoop to the basest, vilest actions, rather than be thought not able to do anything. For what is more base and vile than lying? And when we do, we lie more notoriously when we disparage and find fault with a thing, for no other reason but because it is out of our power.

II.—THE MAN AND HIS TWO WIVES.

A man in times when polygamy was allowed, had two wives one of which, like himself, had seen her best days, and was just, as it were, entering upon the declivity of life; but this

(being an artful woman) she entirely concealed by her dress; by which, and some other elegant qualities, she made a shift sometimes to engage her husband's heart. The other was a beautiful young creature of seventeen, whose charms, as yet in the height of bloom, and secure of her own power, had no occasion to call in any artifice to her assistance. She made the good man as happy as he was capable of being, but was not, it seems, completely so herself. The gray hairs, mixed among the black upon her husband's head, gave her some uneasiness, by proclaiming the great disparity of their years; wherefore, under colour of adjusting and combing his head, she would every now and then be twitching the silver hairs with her nippers, that however matters were, he might still have as few visible signs of an advanced age as possible. The dame, whose years were nearer to an equality with his own, esteemed those gray locks as the honours of his head, and could have wished they had all been such; she thought it gave him a venerable look, at least, that it made her appear something younger than him; so that every time the honest man's head fell into her hands, she took as much pains to extirpate the black hairs as the other had done to demolish the gray. They neither of them knew of the other's design; but each continuing her project with repeated industry, the poor man, who thought their desire to oblige put them upon this extraordinary officiousness in dressing his head, found himself in a short time without any hair at all.

The Application.—Phædrus, whose sense I have generally followed in every Fable of which he has made a version, in his application of this is a little severe upon the ladies; and tells us, that by this example we may see, that the men are sure to be losers by the women, as well when they are objects of their love, as while they lie under their displeasure. All that I shall add to what he has said, is to observe, that many women may unfortunately, out of a pure effect of complaisance, do a thousand disagreeable things to their husbands. They whose love is tempered with a tolerable share of good sense, will be sure to have no separate views of their own, nor do anything more immediately relating to their husband without consulting him first. In a married state, one party should inform themselves certainly, and not be guessing and presuming what will please the other; and if a wife uses her husband like a friend only, the least she can do is first to communicate to him all the important enterprises she

undertakes, and especially those which she intends should be for his honour and advantage.

III.—THE FROGS DESIRING A KING.

The frogs, living an easy, free life, every where among the lakes and ponds, assembled together one day in a very tumultuous manner, and petitioned Jupiter to let them have a king, who might inspect their morals, and make them live a little honester. Jupiter being at that time in pretty good humour, was pleased to laugh heartily at their ridiculous request, and throwing a little log down into the pool, cried, "There is a king for you." The sudden splash which this made by its fall into the water, at first terrified them so exceedingly, that they were afraid to come near it. But, in a little time, seeing it lay still without moving, they ventured, by degrees, to approach it: and at last, finding there was no danger, they leaped upon it, and, in short, treated it as familiarly as they pleased. But not contented with so insipid a king as this was, they sent their deputies to petition again for another sort of one, for this they neither did nor could like. Upon that he sent them a stork, who, without any ceremony, fell devouring and eating them up, one after another, as fast as he could. They then applied themselves privately to Mercury, and got him to speak to Jupiter in their behalf; that he would be so good as bless them again with another king, or restore them again to their former state:—"No," says he, "since it was their own choice, let the obstinate wretches suffer the punishment due to their folly."

The Application.—It is pretty extraordinary to find a Fable of this kind finished with so bold and yet polite a turn by Phædrus; one who attained his freedom by the favour of Augustus, and wrote it in the time of Tiberius, who were successively tyrannical usurpers of the Roman government. If we may take his word for it, Æsop spoke it upon this occasion. When the commonwealth of Athens flourished under good wholesome laws of its own enactment, they relied so much upon the security of their liberty, that they negligently suffered it to run out into licentiousness. And factions happening to be fomented among them by designing people, much about the same time, Pisistratus took that opportunity to make himself master of their citadel and liberties both together. The Athenians finding themselves in a state of slavery, though their tyrant happened to be a very merciful one, yet could not

bear the thoughts of it; so that Æsop, where there was no remedy, prescribes to them patience, by the examples of the foregoing Fable, and adds, at last, "Wherefore, my dear countrymen, be contented with your present condition, bad as it is, for fear a change should be worse."

IV.—THE VAIN JACKDAW.

A CERTAIN jackdaw was so proud and ambitious, that, not contented to live within his own sphere, he picked up the feathers which fell from the peacocks, stuck them in among his own, and very confidently introduced himself into an assembly of those beautiful birds. They soon found him out, stripped him of his borrowed plumes, and falling upon him with their sharp bills, punished him as his presumption deserved. Upon this, full of grief and affliction, he returned to his old companions, and would have flocked with them again; but they, knowing his late life and conversation, industriously avoided him, and refused to admit him into their company; and one of them at the same time gave him this serious reproof:—"If, friend, you could have been contented with your station, and had not disdained the rank in which nature had placed you, you had not been used so scurvily by those upon whom you intruded yourself, nor suffered the notorious slight which now we think ourselves obliged to put upon you."

THE APPLICATION.—What we may learn from this Fable is, in the main, to live contentedly in our condition, whatever it be, without affecting to look bigger than we are, by a false or borrowed light. To be barely pleased with appearing above what a man really is, is bad enough, and what may justly render him contemptible in the eyes of his equals. But if, to enable him to do this with something of a better grace, he has clandestinely feathered his nest with his neighbour's goods, when found out, he has nothing to expect but to be stripped of his plunder, and used like a felonious rogue into the bargain.

V.—THE GOAT AND THE LION.

THE lion, seeing a goat upon a steep craggy rock, where he could not come at him, asked him what delight he could take to skip from one precipice to another all day, and venture the breaking of his neck every moment? "I wonder," says he, "you will not come down, and feed on the plain here, where there is such plenty of good grass,

and fine sweet herbs."—"Why," replies the goat, "I cannot but say your opinion is right; but you look so very hungry and designing, that, to tell you the truth, I do not care to venture my person where you are."

The Application.—Advice, though good in itself, is to be suspected when it is given by a tricking, self-interested man. Perhaps we should take upon ourselves not only a very great, but an unnecessary trouble, if we were to suspect every man who goes to advise us: but this, however, is necessary, that when we have reason to question any one, in point of honour and justice, we not only consider well before we suffer ourselves to be persuaded by him, but even resolve to have nothing to do in the affair, where such treacherous slippery sparks are concerned, if we can avoid it without much inconvenience.

VI.—THE LION AND OTHER BEASTS.

The lion and several other beasts entered into an alliance offensive and defensive, and were to live very sociably together in the forest. One day, having made a sort of an excursion by way of hunting, they took a very fine large fat deer, which was divided into four parts, there happening to be then present, his majesty the lion, and only three others. After the division was made, and the parts were set out, his majesty advancing forward some steps, and pointing to one of the shares, was pleased to declare himself after the following manner:—"This I seize and take possession of as my right, which devolves to me, as I am descended by a true, lineal, hereditary succession from the royal family of lion; that," pointing to the second, "I claim by, I think, no unreasonable demand, considering that all the engagements you have with the enemy turn chiefly upon my courage and conduct; and you very well know, that wars are too expensive to be carried on without proper supplies. Then," nodding his head towards the third, "that I shall take by virtue of my prerogative; to which I make no question but so dutiful and loyal a people will pay all the deference and regard that I can desire. Now, as for the remaining part, the necessity of our present affairs is so very urgent, our stock so low, and our credit so impaired and weakened, that I must insist upon your granting that without any hesitation or demur: and hereof fail not at your peril."

The Application.—No alliance is safe which is made with those that are superior to us in power. Though they lay them-

selves under the most strict and solemn ties at the opening of the congress, yet the first advantageous opportunity will tempt them to break the treaty, and they will never want specious pretences to furnish out their declarations of war. It is not easy to determine whether it is more stupid and ridiculous for a community to trust itself first into the hands of those that are more powerful than themselves, or to wonder afterwards that their confidence and credulity are abused, and their properties invaded.

VII.—THE WOLF AND THE CRANE.

A WOLF, after devouring his prey, happened to have a bone stuck in his throat, which gave him so much pain, that he went howling up and down, importuning every creature he met to lend him a kind hand in order to his relief: nay, he promised a reasonable reward to any one that should undertake the operation with success. At last the crane, tempted with the lucre of the reward, and having first procured him to confirm his promise with an oath, undertook the business, and ventured his long neck into the rapacions felon's throat. In short, he plucked out the bone, and expected the promised gratuity, when the wolf, turning his eyes disdainfully towards him, said, "I did not think you had been so unconscionable; I had your head in my mouth, and could have bit it off whenever I pleased, but suffered you to take it away without any damage, and yet you are not contented."

THE APPLICATION.—There is a sort of people in the world, to whom a man may be in the wrong for doing services upon a double score. First, because they never deserved to have a good office done them; and secondly, because when once engaged, it is so hard a matter to get well rid of their acquaintance.

This Fable is not an example of ingratitude, as at first sight it seems to be, and as some of the mythologists have understood it: to make it a parallel in that case, the crane ought to have been under some difficulties in his turn, and the wolf have refused to assist him when it was in his power. The whole of it lies in this:—That we ought to consider what kind of people they are to whom we are desired to do good offices, before we do them; for he that grants a favour, or even confides in a person of no honour, instead of finding his account in it, comes off well if he is no sufferer.

VIII.—THE STAG LOOKING INTO THE WATER.

A STAG that had been drinking at a clear spring, saw him self in the water; and, pleased with the prospect, stood after-

wards for some time contemplating and surveying his shape and features, from head to foot. "Ah," says he, "what a glorious pair of branching horns are there! how gracefully do those antlers hang over my forehead, and give an agreeable turn to my whole face. If some or other parts of my body were but proportionate to them, I would turn my back to nobody! but I have a set of such legs as really makes me ashamed to see them. People may talk what they please of their conveniences, and what great need we stand in of them upon several occasions; but for my part I find them so very slender and unsightly, that I had as lief had none at all." While he was giving himself these airs, he was alarmed with the noise of some huntsmen and a pack of hounds, that had been just laid on upon the scent, and were making towards him. Away he flies in some consternation, and bounding nimbly over the plain, threw dogs and men at a vast distance behind him. After which, taking a very thick copse, he had the ill luck to be entangled by his horns in a thicket, where he was held fast till the hounds came in, and pulled him down. Finding now how it was like to go with him, in the pangs of death he is said to have uttered these words:— "Unhappy creature that I am! I am too late convinced, that what I prided myself in has been the cause of my undoing; and what I so much disliked, was the only thing that could have saved me."

THE APPLICATION.—Perhaps we cannot apply this better than by supposing the Fable to be a parable which may be thus explained: The deer, viewing itself in the water, is a beautiful young lady at her looking-glass. She cannot help being sensible of the charms which lie blooming in every feature of her face. She moistens her lips, languishes with her eyes, adjusts every lock of her hair with the nicest exactness, gives an agreeable attitude to her whole body, and then with a soft sigh, says to herself, "Ah! how happy might I be in a daily crowd of admirers, if it were not for the censoriousness of the age! When I view that face, where Nature, to give her her due, has been liberal enough of charms, how easy should I be, if it were not for that slender particular, my honour. The odious idea of that comes across all my happy moments, and brings a mortification with it that damps my most flattering, tender hopes. Oh! that there were no such thing in the world!" In the midst of these soliloquies she is interrupted by the voice of her lover, who enters her chamber singing a rigadoon air; and introducing his discourse in a familiar, easy

manner, takes occasion to launch out in praise of her beauty, sees she is pleased with it, snatches her hand, kisses it in transport, and, in short, pursues his point so close, that she is not able to disengage herself from him. But when the consequences of all this approaches, in an agony of grief and shame, she fetches a deep sigh, and says, "Ah! how mistaken have I been! the virtue I slighted might have saved me; but the beauty I prized so much has been my undoing."

IX.—THE FOWLER AND THE LARK.

A FOWLER set snares to catch larks in the open field. A lark was caught, and finding herself entangled, could not forbear lamenting her hard fate. "Ah! woe is me," says she, "what crime have I committed? I have taken neither silver nor gold, nor any thing of value; but must die for eating a poor grain of wheat."

THE APPLICATION.—The irregular administration of justice in the world, is indeed a very melancholy subject to think of. A poor fellow shall be hanged for stealing a sheep, perhaps, to keep his family from starving; while one who is already great and opulent, shall, for that very reason, think himself privileged to commit almost any enormities. But it is necessary that a show and form of justice should be kept up, otherwise were people to be ever so great, and so successful rogues, they would not be able to keep possession of, and enjoy their plunder. One of our poets, in his description of a court of justice, calls it a place—

Where little villains must submit to fate,
That great ones may enjoy the world in state.

What a sad thing it is to reflect (and the more sad, because not to be remedied) that a man may rob the public of millions, and escape at last; when he that is taken picking a pocket of five shillings, unless he knows how to make a friend, is sure to swing for it.

X.—THE TWO BITCHES.

A BITCH, who was just ready to whelp, entreated another bitch to lend her her kennel, only till her month was up, and assured her that then she should have it again. The other very readily consented, and with a great deal of civility, resigned it to her immediately. However, when the time was elapsed, she came and made her a visit, and very modestly intimated, that now she was up and well, she hoped she should see her abroad again; for that, really, it would

be inconvenient for her to be without her kennel any longer, and therefore she told her she must be so free as to desire her to provide herself with other lodgings as soon as she could. The lying-in bitch replied, that truly she was ashamed of having kept her so long out of her own house, but it was not upon her own account (for indeed she was well enough to go anywhere) so much as that of her puppies, who were yet so weak, that she was afraid they would not be able to follow her; and if she would be so good as to let her stay a fortnight longer, she should take it for the greatest obligation in the world. The other bitch was so good-natured and compassionate as to comply with this request too: but at the expiration of the term came and told her positively that she must turn out, for she could not possibly let her be there a day longer. "Must turn out," says the other, "we will see that; for I promise you unless you can beat me and my whole litter of whelps, you are never like to have anything more to do here."

THE APPLICATION.—Possession is eleven points of the law; and though where equity flourishes, and property is duly secured, the twelfth point, I mean that of right, is better than the other eleven, yet this Fable may serve as a very good lesson of caution to us never to let anything we value go out of our possession without very good security. Wise and good-natured men will give liberally and judiciously what they can spare; but to lend where there is a probability of our being defrauded by the borrower, is the part of a too easy and blameable credulity.

XI.—THE PROUD FROG.

AN OX, grazing in a meadow, chanced to set his foot among a parcel of young frogs, and trod one of them to death. The rest informed their mother, when she came home, what had happened, telling her that the beast which did it was the hugest creature that they ever saw in their lives. "What! was it so big?" says the old frog, swelling and blowing up her speckled belly to a great degree. "Oh! bigger by a vast deal," said they. "And so big?" says she, straining herself yet more. "Indeed, mamma," said they, "if you were to burst yourself, you would never be so big." She strove yet again, and burst herself indeed.

THE APPLICATION.—Whenever a man endeavours to live equal with one of a greater fortune than himself, he is sure to share a like fate with the frog in the Fable. How many vain people of

moderate easy circumstances, burst and come to nothing, by vieing with those whose estates are more ample than their own? Sir Changeling Plumstock was possessed of a very considerable estate, devolved to him by the death of an old uncle, who had adopted him his heir. He had a false taste of happiness; and without the least economy, trusting to the sufficiency of his vast revenue, was resolved to be outdone by nobody in showish grandeur and expensive living. He gave five thousand pounds for a piece of ground in the country to set a house upon, the building and furniture of which cost fifty thousand more; and his gardens were proportionably magnificent. Besides which, he thought himself under the necessity of buying out two or three tenements which stood in his neighbourhood, that he might have elbow-room enough. All this he could very well bear; and still might have been happy, had it not been for an unfortunate view which he one day happened to take of my Lord Castlebuilder's gardens, which consisted of twenty acres, whereas his own was not above twelve. From that time he grew pensive; and before the ensuing winter gave five-and-thirty years' purchase for a dozen acres more to enlarge his gardens, built a couple of exorbitant green-houses, and a large pavilion at the further end of the terrace walk. The bare repairs and superintendences of all which call for the remaining part of his income. He is mortgaged pretty deep, and pays nobody; but being a privileged person, resides altogether at a private cheap lodging in the city of Westminster.

XII.—THE FOX AND THE STORK.

The fox invited the stork to dinner, and being disposed to divert himself at the expense of his guest, provided nothing for the entertainment but a soup, in a wide, shallow dish. This himself could lap up with a great deal of ease; but the stork, who could but just dip in the point of his bill, was not a bit the better all the while: however, in a few days after, he returned the compliment, and invited the fox; but suffered nothing to be brought to table but some minced meat in a glass jar, the neck of which was so deep, and so narrow, that though the stork with his long bill made a shift to fill his belly, all that the fox, who was very hungry, could do, was to lick the brims, as the stork slabbered them with his eating. Reynard was heartily vexed at first; but when he came to take his leave, owned ingenuously that he had been used as he deserved, and that he had no reason to take any treatment ill, of which himself had set the example.

The Application.—It is mighty imprudent, as well as inhuman and uncivil, to affront anybody; and whoever takes the liberty to exercise his witty talent that way, must not think much of it if he meets with reprisals. Indeed, if all those who are thus paid in their own coin would take it with the same frankness the fox did, the matter would not be much; but we are too apt, when the jest comes to be turned home upon ourselves, to think that insufferable in another, which we looked upon as pretty and facetious when the humour was our own. The rule of doing as we would be done by, so proper to be our model in every transaction of life, may more particularly be of use in this respect; because people seldom or never receive any advantage by these little ludicrous impositions; and yet, if they were to ask themselves the question, would find, that another's using them in the same manner would be very displeasing.

XIII.—THE EAGLE AND THE FOX.

An eagle that had young ones, looking out for something to feed them with, happened to spy a fox's cub, that lay basking itself abroad in the sun; she made a stoop and trussed it immediately; but before she carried it quite off, the old fox, coming home, implored her with tears in her eyes, to spare her cub, and pity the distress of a poor fond mother, who should think no affliction so great as that of losing her child. The eagle, whose nest was up in a very high tree, thought herself secure enough from all projects of revenge, and so bore away the cub to her young ones, without showing any regard to the supplications of the fox. But that subtle creature, highly incensed at this outrageous barbarity, ran to an altar where some country people had been sacrificing a kid in the open fields, and catching up a firebrand in her mouth, made towards the tree where the eagle's nest was, with a resolution of revenge. She had scarce ascended the first branches, when the eagle, terrified at the approaching ruin of herself and family, begged of the fox to desist, and with much submission, returned her the cub again safe and sound.

The Application.—This Fable is a warning to us not to deal hardly or injuriously by anybody. The consideration of our being in a high condition of life, and those we hurt far below us, will plead little or no excuse for us in this case. For there is scarce a creature of so despicable a rank but is capable of avenging itself some way, and at some time or other. When great men happen

to be wicked, how little scruple do they make of oppressing their poor neighbours! They are perched upon a lofty station, and have built their nests on high; and having outgrown all feelings of humanity, are insensible of any pangs of remorse. The widow's tears, the orphan's cries, and the curses of the miserable, like javelins thrown by the hand of a feeble old man, fall by the way, and never reach their heart. But let such a one, in the midst of his flagrant injustice, remember how easy a matter it is, notwithstanding his superior distance, for the meanest vassal to be revenged of him. The bitterness of an affliction, even where cunning is wanting, may animate the poorest spirit with resolutions of vengeance; and when once that fury is thoroughly awakened, we know not what she will require before she is lulled to rest again. The most powerful tyrants cannot prevent a resolved assassination; there are a thousand different ways for any private man to do the business, who is heartily disposed to it, and willing to satisfy his appetite for revenge at the expense of his life. An old woman may clap a firebrand in the palace of a prince, and it is in the power of a poor weak fool to destroy the children of the mighty.

XIV.—THE BOAR AND THE ASS.

A LITTLE scoundrel of an ass happening to meet with a boar, had a mind to be arch upon him. "And so, brother," says he, "your humble servant." The boar, somewhat nettled at this familiarity, bristled up to him and told him he was surprised to hear him utter so impudent an untruth, and was just going to show his noble resentment, by giving him a rip in the flank; but, wisely stifling his passion, he contented himself with only saying, "Go, you sorry beast! I could be amply and easily revenged of you, but I do not care to foul my tusks with the blood of so base a creature."

THE APPLICATION.—Fools are sometimes so ambitious of being thought wits, that they run great hazards in attempting to show themselves such. This is not the first ass who, after a handsome rebuke from one superior to himself, both in courage and merit, has continued his awkward raillery even to the last degree of offence. But such a dull creature is so far from raising himself the least esteem by his ridiculous vein, that he has very good luck if he escapes with a whole skin. Buffoons, like dwarfs, should be matched with those of their own level; a man, in sense or stature, would be ashamed to encounter either of them. But, notwithstanding all this, and though the boar in the Fable is a very good example to men of generous, brave spirits, not to give themselves

up to passion, not to be distempered with thoughts of revenge upon the insolent behaviour of every ass that offends them, because their hands would be dishonoured by the tincture of a base man's blood, yet among human creatures, the corrections of an ass, that would be unseasonably witty, may be performed with justness and propriety enough, provided it be done in good humour. The blood of a coward, literally speaking, would stain the character of a man of honour; when we chastise such wretches, it should be done, if possible, in the utmost calmness of temper. It takes off something from the reputation of a great soul, when we see it is in the power of a fool to ruffle and unsettle it.

XV.—THE FROGS AND THE FIGHTING BULLS.

A FROG, one day peeping out of the lake, and looking about him, saw two bulls fighting at some distance off in the meadow, and calling to one of his acquaintance, "Look," says he, "what dreadful work is yonder! Dear sirs, what will become of us?"—"Why, pray thee," says the other, "do not frighten yourself so about nothing; how can their quarrels affect us? They are of a different kind and way of living, and are at present only contending which shall be master of the herd."—"That is true," replies the first, "their quality and station in life, is, to all appearance, different enough from ours; but as one of them will certainly get the better, he that is worsted, being beat out of the meadow, will take refuge here in the marshes, and may possibly tread out the guts of some of us: so you see we are more nearly concerned in this dispute of theirs than at first you were aware of."

THE APPLICATION.—This poor timorous frog had just reason for its fears and suspicions; it being hardly possible for great people to fall out without involving many below them in the same fate; nay, whatever becomes of the former, the latter are sure to suffer; those may only be playing the fool, while these really smart for it. It is of no small importance to the honest, quiet part of mankind, who desire nothing so much as to see peace and virtue flourish, to enter seriously and impartially into the consideration of this point; for as significant as the quarrels of the great may sometimes be, yet they are nothing without their espousing and supporting them one way or other. What is it that occasions parties, but the ambitious or avaricious spirit of men in eminent stations, who want to engross all power in their own hands? Upon this they foment divisions, and form factions, and excite animosities between

well-meaning, but undiscerning people, who little think that the great aim of their leaders is no more than the advancement of their own private self-interest. The good of the public is always pretended upon such occasions, and may sometimes happen to be tacked to their own, but then it is purely accidental, and never was originally intended. One knows not what remedy to prescribe against so epidemical and frequent a malady, but only that every man who has sense enough to discern the pitiful private views that attend most of the differences between the great ones, instead of aiding or abetting either party, would, with an honest courage, heartily and openly oppose both.

XVI.—THE KITE AND THE PIGEONS.

A KITE, who had kept sailing in the air for many days near a dove-house, and made a stoop at several pigeons, but all to no purpose (for they were too nimble for him), at last had recourse to stratagem, and took his opportunity one day to make a declaration to them, in which he set forth his own just and good intentions, who had nothing more at heart than the defence and protection of the pigeons in their ancient rights and liberties; and how concerned he was at their fears and jealousies of a foreign invasion, especially their unjust and unreasonable suspicions of himself, as if he intended, by force of arms, to break in upon their constitution, and erect a tyrannical government over them. To prevent all which, and thoroughly to quiet their minds, he thought proper to propose to them such terms of alliance and articles of peace, as might for ever cement a good understanding betwixt them. The principal of which was, that they should accept of him for their king, and invest him with all kingly privilege and prerogative over them. The poor simple pigeons consented; the kite took the coronation oath after a very solemn manner on his part; and the doves, the oaths of allegiance and fidelity on theirs. But much time had not passed over their heads, before the good kite pretended that it was part of his prerogative to devour a pigeon whenever he pleased. And this he was not contented to do himself only, but instructed the rest of the royal family in the same kingly arts of government. The pigeons, reduced to this miserable condition, said one to the other, "Ah! we deserve no better! Why did we let him come in?"

THE APPLICATION.—What can this Fable be applied to but the

P. 27.

exceeding blindness and stupidity of that part of mankind, who wantonly and foolishly trust their native rights and liberty without good security? Who often choose for guardians of their lives and fortunes persons abandoned to the most unsociable vices; and seldom have any better excuse for such an error in politics, than that they were deceived in their expectation, or never thoroughly knew the manners of their king till he had got them entirely in his power. Which, however, is notoriously false; for many, with the doves in the Fable, are so silly, that they would admit of a kite rather than be without a king. The truth is, we ought not to incur the possibility of being deceived in so important a matter as this; an unlimited power should not be trusted in the hands of any one who is not endued with a perfection more than human.

XVII.—THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.

One hot sultry day, a wolf and a lamb happened to come just at the same time to quench their thirst in the stream of a clear silver brook, that ran tumbling down the side of a rocky mountain. The wolf stood upon the higher ground; and the lamb at some distance from him down the current. However, the wolf having a mind to pick a quarrel with him, asked him what he meant by disturbing the water, and making it so muddy that he could not drink? and at the same time, demanded satisfaction. The lamb, frightened at this threatening charge, told him, in a tone as mild as possible, that with humble submission he could not conceive how that could be: since the water that he drank ran down from the wolf to him, and therefore could not be disturbed so far up the stream. "Be that as it will," replies the wolf, "you are a rascal; and I have been told that you treated me with ill language behind my back, about half a year ago."—"Upon my word," says the lamb, "the time you mention was before I was born." The wolf, finding it to no purpose to argue any longer against the truth, fell into a great passion, snarling and foaming at the mouth, as if he had been mad; and drawing nearer to the lamb, "Sirrah," says he, "if it was not you, it was your father, and that's all one." So he seized the poor innocent, helpless thing, tore it to pieces, and made a meal of it.

The Application.—The thing which is pointed at in this Fable is so obvious, that it will be impertinent to multiply words about it. When a cruel ill-natured man has a mind to abuse one inferior to himself, either in power or courage, though he has not

given the least occasion for it, how does he resemble the wolf! whose envious rapacious temper could not bear to see innocence live quietly in its neighbourhood. In short, wherever ill people are in power, innocence and integrity are sure to be persecuted: the more vicious the community is, the better countenance they have for their own villanous measures. To practise honesty in bad times, is being liable to suspicion enough; but if any one should dare to prescribe it, it is ten to one but he would be impeached of high crimes and misdemeanors; for to stand up for justice, in a degenerate and corrupt state, is tacitly to upbraid the government, and seldom fails of pulling down vengeance upon the head of him that offers to stir in its defence. Where cruelty and malice are in combination with power, nothing is so easy as for them to find a pretence to tyrannise over innocence, and exercise all manner of injustice.

XVIII.—THE STAG IN THE OX-STALL

A STAG, roused out of his thick covert in the midst of the forest, and, driven hard by the hounds, made towards a farm-house, and seeing the door of an ox-stall open, entered therein, and hid himself under a heap of straw. One of the oxen turning his head about, asked him what he meant by venturing himself in such a place as that was, where he was sure to meet with his doom? "Ah!" says the stag, "if you will but be so good as to favour me with your concealment, I hope I shall do well enough; I intend to make off again the first opportunity." Well, he staid there till towards night; in came the ox-man with a bundle of fodder, and never saw him. In short, all the servants of the farm came and went, and not a soul of them smelt anything of the matter. Nay, the bailiff himself came, according to form, and looked in, but walked away no wiser than the rest. Upon this the stag, ready to jump out of his skin for joy, began to return thanks to the good-natured oxen, protesting that they were the most obliging people he had ever met with in his life. After he had done his compliments, one of them answered him gravely, "Indeed, we desire nothing more than to have it in our power to contribute to your escape; but there is a certain person, you little think of, who has a hundred eyes; if he should happen to come, I would not give this straw for your life." In the interim, home comes the master himself from a neighbour's, where he had been invited to dinner; and because he had observed the cattle to look but scurvily

of late, he went up to the rack, and asked, "why did they not give them more fodder?" Then casting his eyes downward, "Hey-day!" says he, "why so sparing of your litter? pray scatter a little more here. And these cobwebs—but I have spoken so often, that unless I do it myself"—thus, as he went on, prying into everything, he chanced to look where the stag's horns lay sticking out of the straw; upon which he raised a hue and cry, called all his people about him, killed the poor stag, and made a prize of him.

THE APPLICATION.—The moral of this Fable is, that nobody looks after a man's affairs so well as himself. Servants being but hirelings, seldom have the true interest of their master at heart, but let things run on in a negligent constant disorder, and this generally not so much for want of capacity as honesty. Their heads are taken up with the cultivation of their own private interest; for the service and promotion of which, that of their master is postponed, and often entirely neglected. Few families are reduced to poverty and distress merely by their own extravagance and indulgence in luxury. The inattention of servants swells every article of expense in domestic economy; and the retinue of great men, instead of exerting their industry to conduce as far as possible to the increase of their master's wealth, commonly exercise no other office than that of locusts and caterpillars to consume and devour it.

XIX.—THE DOG AND THE WOLF.

A LEAN, hungry, half-starved wolf, happened one moon-shiny night to meet with a jolly, plump, well-fed mastiff; and after the first compliments were passed, says the wolf, "You look extremely well; I protest I think I never saw a more graceful comely person: but how comes it about, I beseech you, that you should live so much better than I? I may say, without vanity, that I venture fifty times more than you do, and yet I am almost ready to perish with hunger." The dog answered very bluntly, "Why you may live as well, if you will do the same for it that I do."—"Indeed! what is that?" says he. "Why," says the dog, "only to guard the house a-nights, and keep it from thieves."—"With all my heart," replies the wolf, "for at present I have but a sorry time of it; and I think to change my hard lodging in the woods, where I endure rain, frost, and snow, for a warm roof over my head, and a belly-full of good victuals, will be no bad bargain."—"True," says the dog, "therefore you

have nothing more to do but to follow me." Now as they were jogging on together, the wolf spied a crease in the dog's neck, and, having a strange curiosity, could not forbear asking him what it meant. "Pugh! nothing," says the dog. "Nay, but pray," says the wolf. "Why," says the dog, "if you must know, I am tied up in the day time, because I am a little fierce, for fear I should bite people, and am only let loose a-nights. But this is done with a design to make me sleep a-days more than anything else, and that I may watch the better in the night-time; for as soon as ever the twilight appears, out I am turned, and may go where I please. Then my master brings me plates of bones from the table with his own hands; and whatever scraps are left by any of the family, all fall to my share, for you must know I am a favourite with everybody. So you see how you are to live. Come, come along; what is the matter with you?"—"No," replied the wolf, "I beg your pardon; keep your happiness all to yourself. Liberty is the word with me: and I would not be a king upon the terms you mention."

The Application.—The lowest condition of life, with freedom attending it, is better than the most exalted station under a restraint. Æsop and Phædrus, who had both felt the bitter effects of slavery, though the latter of them had the good fortune to have the mildest prince that ever was for his master, cannot forbear taking all opportunities to express their great abhorrence of servitude, and their passion for liberty, upon any terms whatsoever. Indeed, a state of slavery, with whatever seeming grandeur and happiness it may be attended, is yet so precarious a thing, that he must want sense, honour, courage, and all manner of virtue, who can endure to prefer it in his choice. A man who has so little honour as to bear to be a slave, when it is in his power to prevent or redress it, would make no scruple to cut the throats of his fellow-creatures, or to do any wickedness that the wanton, unbridled will of his tyrannical master could suggest.

XX.—THE LAMB BROUGHT UP BY A GOAT.

A wolf meeting a lamb one day in company with a goat, "Child," says he, "you are mistaken, this is none of your mother, she is yonder" (pointing to a flock of sheep at a distance). "It may be so," says the lamb: "the person that happened to conceive me, and afterwards bore me a few months in her belly because she could not help it, and then dropt me she did not care where, and left me to the wide

world, is, I suppose, what you call my mother; but I look upon this charitable goat as such that took compassion on me in my poor helpless, destitute condition, and gave me suck; sparing it out of the mouths of her own kids, rather than that I should want it."—"But sure," says he, "you have a greater regard for her that gave you life, than for anybody else."—"She gave me life! I deny that. She that could not so much as tell whether I should be black or white, had a great hand in giving me life to be sure! But, supposing it were so, I am mightily obliged to her, truly, for contriving to let me be of the male kind, so that I go every day in danger of the butcher. What reason, then, have I to have a greater regard for one to whom I am so little indebted for any part of my being, than for those from whom I have received all the benevolence and kindness which have hitherto supported me in life?"

THE APPLICATION.—It is they whose goodness makes them our parents that properly claim our filial respect from us, and not those who are such only out of necessity. The duties between parents and their children are relative and reciprocal. By all laws, natural as well as civil, it is expected that the parents should cherish and provide for the child till it is able to provide for itself, and that the child, with a mutual tenderness, should depend upon the parent for its sustenance, and yield it a reasonable obedience. Yet, through the depravity of human nature, we very often see the laws violated, and the relations before mentioned treating one another with as much virulence as enemies of different countries are capable of. Through the natural impatience and protervity of youth, we observe the first occasion for any animosity most frequently arising from their side; but, however, there are not wanting examples of undutiful parents; and when a father, by using a son ill, and denying him such an education and such an allowance as his circumstances can well afford, gives him occasion to withdraw his respect from him, to urge his begetting of him as the sole obligation to duty, is talking like a silly, unthinking dotard. Mutual benevolence must be kept up between relations as well as friends: for without this cement, whatever you please to call the building, it is only a castle in the air—a thing to be talked of, without the least reality.

XXI.—THE PEACOCK'S COMPLAINT.

THE peacock presented a memorial to Juno, importing how hardly he thought he was used in not having so good a

voice as the nightingale; how that pretty animal was agreeable to every ear that heard it, while he was laughed at for his ugly, screaming noise, if he did but open his mouth. The goddess, concerned at the uneasiness of her favourite bird, answered him very kindly to this purpose: "If the nightingale is blest with a fine voice, you have the advantage in point of beauty and largeness of person."—"Ah!" says he, "but what avails my silent unmeaning beauty, when I am so far excelled in voice?" The goddess dismissed him, bidding him consider that the properties of every creature were appointed by the decree of fate: to him beauty; strength to the eagle; to the nightingale a voice of melody; the faculty of speech to the parrot; and to the dove innocence. That each of these was contented with his own peculiar quality: and unless he had a mind to be miserable, he must learn to be so too.

The Application.—Since all things, as Juno says, are fixed by the eternal and unalterable decree of Fate, how absurd it is to hear people complaining and tormenting themselves for that which it is impossible ever to obtain. They who are ambitious of having more good qualities, since that is impracticable, should spare no pains to cultivate and recommend those they have; which a sourness and peevishness of temper, instead of improving, will certainly lessen and impair, whether they are of the mind or body. If we had all the desirable properties in the world, we could be no more than easy and contented with them; and if a man, by a right way of thinking, can reconcile himself to his own condition, whatever it be, he will fall little short of the most complete state that mortals ever enjoyed.

XXII.—THE COCK AND THE JEWEL.

A brisk young cock happened to scratch up a jewel; he knew what it was well enough, for it sparkled with an exceeding bright lustre; but not knowing what to do with it, endeavoured to cover his ignorance under a gay contempt. So shrugging up his wings, shaking his head and putting on a grimace, he expressed himself to this purpose:—"Indeed, you are a very fine thing; but I know not any business you have here. I make no scruple of declaring, that my taste lies quite another way: and I had rather have one grain of dear delicious barley, than all the jewels under the sun."

The Application.—There are several people in the world that pass with some for well-accomplished gentlemen, and very pretty

fellows, though they are as great strangers to the true uses of virtue and knowledge as the cock upon the dunghill is to the real value of the jewel. He palliates his ignorance by pretending that his taste lies another way: but whatever gallant airs people may give themselves upon these occasions, without dispute, the solid advantages of virtue, and the durable pleasures of learning, are as much to be preferred before other objects of the senses, as the finest brilliant diamond is above a barley-corn. The greatest blockheads would appear to understand, what at the same time they affect to despise; and nobody yet was ever so vicious as to have the impudence to declare in public, that virtue was not a fine thing.

But still, among the idle, sauntering young fellows of the age, who have leisure, as well to cultivate and improve the faculties of the mind, as to dress and embellish the body, how many are there that spend their days in raking after new scenes of debauchery, in comparison of those who know how to relish more reasonable entertainments! Honest, undesigning good sense is so unfashionable, that he must be a bold man, who at this time of day attempts to bring it into esteem.

How disappointed is the youth, who, in the midst of his amorous pursuits, endeavouring to plunder an outside of bloom and beauty, finds a treasure of impenetrable virtue concealed within! and why may it not be said, how delighted are the fair sex, when, from among a crowd of empty, frolicsome, conceited admirers, they find out and distinguish with their good opinion a man of sense, with a plain, unaffected person, which at first sight they did not like!

XXIII.—THE VIPER AND THE FILE.

A VIPER entering a smith's shop, looked up and down for something to eat; and seeing a file, fell to gnawing it as greedily as could be. The file told him very gruffly, that he had best be quiet and let him alone, for he would get very little by nibbling at one who, upon occasion, could bite iron and steel.

THE APPLICATION.—By this Fable we are cautioned to consider what any person is before we make an attack upon him, after any manner whatsoever; particularly how we let our tongues slip in censuring the actions of those who are, in the opinion of the world, not only of an unquestioned reputation, so that nobody will believe what we insinuate against them, but of such an influence, upon account of their own veracity, that the least word from them would ruin our credit to all intents and purposes. If wit be the

case, and we have a satirical vein, which at certain periods must have a flow, let us be cautious at whom we level it: for if the person's understanding be of better proof than our own, all our ingenious sallies, like liquor squirted against the wind, will recoil back upon our own faces, and make us the ridicule of every spectator. This Fable, besides, is not an improper emblem of envy, which rather than not bite at all, will fall foul where it can hurt nothing but itself.

XXIV.—THE COCK AND THE FOX.

The fox, passing early one summer's morning near a farm-yard, was caught in a spring, which the farmer had planted there for that end. The cock at a distance saw what happened, and hardly yet daring to trust himself too near so dangerous a foe, approached him cautiously, and peeped at him, not without some horror and dread of mind. Reynard no sooner perceived it, but he addressed himself to him with all the designing artifice imaginable. "Dear cousin," says he, "you see what an unfortunate accident has befallen me here, and all upon your account; for as I was creeping through yonder hedge in my way homeward, I heard you crow, and was resolved to ask you how you did, before I went any further; but by the way I met with this disaster; and therefore now I must become an humble suitor to you for a knife to cut this plaguy string; or, at least, that you would conceal my misfortune till I have gnawed it asunder with my teeth." The cock, seeing how the case stood, made no reply, but posted away as fast as he could, and gave the farmer an account of the whole matter; who, taking a good weapon along with him, came and did the fox's business before he could have time to contrive his escape.

The Application.—Though there is no quality of the mind more graceful in itself, or that renders it more amiable to others, than the having a tender regard to those who are in distress, yet we may err even in this point, unless we take care to let our compassion flow out upon proper objects only. When the innocent fall into misfortune, it is the part of a generous, brave spirit, to contribute to their redemption, or, if that be impossible, to administer something to their comfort and support. But when wicked men, who have been enemies to their fellow-subjects, are entrapped in their own pernicious schemes, he that labours to deliver them makes himself an associate in their crimes, and becomes as great an enemy to the public as those whom he would screen and protect.

When highwaymen and housebreakers are taken, condemned, and going to satisfy justice at the expense of their vile, paltry lives, who are they that grieve for them, and would be glad to rescue them from the rope? Not honest men, we are sure. The rest of the thieving fraternity would perhaps commiserate their condition, and be ready to mutiny in their favour. Nay, the rascally solicitor, who has been employed upon their account, would be vexed that his negotiations had succeeded no better, and be afraid of losing his reputation among other delinquents for the future. But every friend to justice would have no reason to be dissatisfied at anything but a mournful reflection which he could not forbear making, that while these little criminals swing for some trifling, inconsiderable rapine, others, so transcendently their superiors in fraud and plunder, escape with a whole skin.

XXV.—THE MAN AND HIS WOODEN GOD.

A MAN, having a wooden god, worshipped it every day; and, among other things, prayed particularly for wealth, because his circumstances were but low. But when he had continued to do this for many days to no purpose, in a passion at the disappointment, he took the image by the legs, knocked it against the pavement, and broke it in pieces, upon which a great quantity of money which had been enclosed within it flew about the room. The man no sooner perceived this, but addressing himself to the idol, "Thou obstinate, perverse deity," says he, "who, while I humbly besought thee, hadst no regard to my prayers, but now thou art used ill and broken to pieces dost pour forth good things in even a greater abundance than I could desire."

THE APPLICATION.—This is a Fable of a very extraordinary composition, if, as the ancient mythologists say, it is designed to signify no more than that where fair means will not do, foul must be used. Indeed some natures are so very rough and untractable, that gentle usage and moderate treatment are thrown away upon them; they must be wrought upon like stubborn metals, by blows frequently and heartily applied. But what has all this to do with religion, and the worship of God? The Fable is useless in that respect, unless we consider it in this light, that the adoration of images is the most stupid part of religion that ever was invented. How any of the sober, sensible heathen world could be induced so as to give in to such an unreasonable piece of devotion is astonishing; or how could they suppose that a senseless stock or stone, which had neither life nor motion in it, could understand their

complaints, and redress their grievances; such a supposition must be monstrously absurd and foolish. But what, then, must we think of those Christians who blindly run into the same practice, though they have an acknowledged and received command from the God they worship, absolutely forbidding it! What was only stupidity in the heathens, in them is gross wickedness and profane impudent impiety. But the people who can be made to believe that this is right, may be taught to swallow anything, and consequently are the fittest tools to carry on the trade of priestcraft.

XXVI.—THE MOUNTAINS IN LABOUR.

THE mountains were said to be in labour, and uttered most dreadful groans. People came together, far and near, to see what birth would be produced, and after they had waited a considerable time in expectation, out crept a mouse!

THE APPLICATION.—"Great cry and little wool," is the English proverb; the sense of which bears an exact proportion to this Fable. By which are exposed all those who promise something exceedingly great, but come off with a production ridiculously little. Projectors of all kinds who endeavour by artificial rumours to raise the expectations of mankind, and then by their mean performances defeat and disappoint them, have, time out of mind, been lashed with the recital of this Fable. How agreeably surprising is it to see an unpromising favourite, whom the caprice of fortune has placed at the helm of state, serving the commonwealth with justice and integrity, instead of smothering and embezzling the public treasure to his own private and wicked ends! And, on the contrary, how melancholy, how dreadful, or rather, how exasperating and provoking a sight is it, to behold one, whose constant declarations for liberty and the public good have raised people's expectation of him to the highest pitch, as soon as he is got into power, exerting his whole art and cunning to ruin and enslave his country! The sanguine hopes of all those that wished well to virtue, and flattered themselves with a reformation of everything that opposed the well-being of the community, vanish away in smoke, and are lost in a dark, gloomy, uncomfortable prospect.

XXVII.—THE ANT AND THE FLY.

ONE day there happened some words between the ant and the fly about precedency, and the point was argued with great warmth and eagerness on both sides. Says the fly, "It is well known what my pretensions are, and how justly

grounded. There is never a sacrifice that is offered, but I always taste of the entrails, even before the gods themselves. I have one of the uppermost seats at church, and frequent the altar as often as anybody. I have a free admission at court, and can never want the king's ear, for I sometimes sit upon his shoulder. There is not a maid of honour, or handsome young creature comes in my way, but if I like her I settle between her balmy lips. And then I eat and drink the best of everything, without having any occasion to work for my living. What is there that such country pusses as you enjoy, to be compared to a life like this?" The ant, who by this time had composed herself, replied, with a great deal of temper, and no less severity: "Indeed, to be a guest at the entertainment of the gods is a very great honour, if one is invited, but I should not care to be a disagreeable intruder anywhere. You talk of the king and the court, and the fine ladies there, with great familiarity; but as I have been getting in my harvest in summer, I have seen a certain person under the town walls, making a hearty meal upon something that is not so proper to be mentioned. As to your frequenting the altars, you are in the right to take sanctuary where you are like to meet with the least disturbance; but I have known people before now run to altars, and call it devotion, when they have been shut out of all good company, and had nowhere else to go. You don't work for your living, you say: true—therefore when you have played away the summer, and winter comes, you have nothing to live upon; and while you are starving with cold and hunger, I have a good warm house over my head, and plenty of provisions about me."

The Application.—This Fable points out to us the different characters of those that recommend themselves in vain-glorious ways by false and borrowed lights; and of those whose real merit procures them a good esteem wherever they go. Poverty and folly having at the same time possession of any one man, cannot fail of making him an object of pity, if not of contempt; but when an empty conceited pride happens to be joined with them, they render the creature in whom they meet, at the same time despicable and ridiculous. One who often attends at court, not because he has a place, but because he has not, should not value himself upon his condition. They who go to church out of vanity and curiosity, and not for pure devotion, should not value themselves for their religion, for it is not worth a straw. They who eat at a threepenny

ordinary, and sometimes not so well, should not boast either of their dinner or company. In short, nobody is a better gentleman than he whose own honest industry supplies him with plenty of all necessaries: who is so well acquainted with honour, as never to say or do a mean or unjust thing: and who despises an idle scoundrel, but knows how to esteem men of his own principles. Such a one is a person of the first quality, though he has never a title, and ought to take place of every man who is not so good as himself.

XXVIII.—THE OLD HOUND.

An old hound, who had been an excellent good one in his time, and had given his master great sport and satisfaction in many a chase, at last, by the effect of years, became feeble and unserviceable. However, being in the field one day, when the stag was almost run down, he happened to be the first that came in with him, and seized him by one of his haunches: but his decayed and broken teeth not being able to keep their hold, the deer escaped, and threw him quite out. Upon which, his master being in a great passion, and going to strike him, the honest old creature is said to have barked out this apology:—"Ah! do not strike your poor old servant; it is not my heart and inclination, but my strength and speed that fail me. If what I am now displeases, pray don't forget what I have been."

The Application.—This Fable may serve to give us a general view of the ingratitude of the greatest part of mankind. Notwithstanding all the civility and complaisance that is used among people where there is a common intercourse of business, yet, let the main-spring, the probability of their being serviceable to each other, either in point of pleasure or profit, be but once broken, and farewell courtesy: so far from continuing any regard in behalf of past favours, it is very well if they forbear doing anything that is injurious. If the master had only ceased to caress and make much of the old hound when he was past doing any service, it would not have been very strange; but to treat a poor creature ill, not for a failure of inclination, but merely a defect of nature, must, notwithstanding the crowd of examples there are to countenance it, be pronounced inhuman and unreasonable.

There are two accounts upon which people that have been useful are frequently neglected. One, when they are so decayed, either through age or some accident, that they are no longer able to do the services they have formerly done; the other, when the occasion

or emergency which required such talents, no longer exists. Phædrus, who more than once complains of the bad consequences of age, makes no other application to this Fable, than by telling his friend Philetus, with some regret, that he wrote it with such a view: having, it seems, been repaid with neglect, or worse usage, for services done in his youth to those who were then able to afford him a better recompense.

XXIX.—THE SICK KITE.

A KITE had been sick a long time, and finding there was no hopes of recovery, begged of his mother to go to all the churches and religious houses in the country to try what prayers and promises would effect in his behalf. The old kite replied, "Indeed, dear son, I would willingly undertake anything to save your life, but I have great reason to despair of doing you any service in the way you propose; for with what face can I ask anything of the gods in favour of one whose whole life has been a continual scene of rapine and injustice, and who has not scrupled, upon occasion, to rob the very altars themselves?"

THE APPLICATION.—The rehearsal of this Fable almost unavoidably draws the attention to that very serious and important point, the consideration of a death-bed repentance; and to expose the absurdity of relying upon such a weak foundation, we need only ask the same question with the kite in the Fable: how can he that has offended the gods all his life-time, by doing acts of dishonour and injustice, expect that they should be pleased with him at last, for no other reason but because he fears he shall not be able to offend them any longer? when, in truth, such a repentance can signify nothing but a confirmation of his former impudence and folly, for sure no stupidity can exceed that of the man who expects a future judgment, and yet can bear to commit any piece of injustice, with a sense and deliberation of the fact.

XXX.—THE HARES AND THE FROGS.

UPON a great storm of wind that blew among the trees and bushes, and made a rustling with the leaves, the hares in a certain park (where there happened to be plenty of them) were so terribly frighted, that they ran like mad all over the place, resolving to seek out some retreat of more security, or to end their unhappy days by doing violence to themselves. With this resolution, they found an outlet where a pale had been broken down; and, bolting forth upon an

adjoining common, had not run far before their course was stopped by that of a gentle brook, which glided across the way they intended to take. This was so grievous a disappointment that they were not able to bear it, and they determined rather to throw themselves headlong into the water, let what would become of it, than lead a life so full of dangers and crosses. But upon their coming to the brink of the river, a parcel of frogs, which were sitting there, frightened at their approach, leapt into the stream in great confusion, and dived to the very bottom for fear: which a cunning old puss observing, called to the rest, and said, "Hold! have a care what you do; here are other creatures, I perceive, which have their fears as well as us; don't then let us fancy ourselves the most miserable of any upon earth; but rather, by their example, learn to bear patiently those inconveniences which nature has thrown upon us."

THE APPLICATION.—This Fable is designed to show us how unreasonable many people are, for living in such continual fears and disquiets about the miserableness of their condition. There is hardly any state of life great enough to satisfy the wishes of an ambitious man; and scarce any so mean, but may supply all the necessities of him that is moderate. But if people will be so unwise as to work themselves up to imaginary misfortunes, why do they grumble at nature and their stars, when their own perverse minds are only to blame? If we are to conclude ourselves unhappy by as many degrees as there are others greater than we are, why then the greatest part of mankind must be miserable, in some degree at least; but if they, who repine at their own afflicted condition, would but reckon up how many more are there with whom they would not change cases, than those whose pleasures they envy, they would certainly rise up better satisfied with such a calculation. But what shall we say to those who have a way of creating themselves panics, from the rustling of the wind, the scratching of a rat or a mouse behind the hangings, the fluttering of a moth, or the motion of their own shadow by moonlight? Their whole life is as full of alarms as that of a hare, and they never think themselves so happy as when, like the timorous folks in the Fable, they meet with a set of creatures as fearful as themselves.

XXXI.—THE LION AND THE MOUSE.

A LION, faint with heat, and weary with hunting, was laid down to take his repose under the spreading boughs of a

thick shady oak. It happened, that while he slept, a company of scrambling mice ran over his back and waked him. Upon which, starting up, he clapped his paw upon one of them, and was just going to put it to death, when the little suppliant implored his mercy in a very moving manner, begging him not to stain his noble character with the blood of so despicable and small a beast. The lion, considering the matter, thought proper to do as he was desired, and immediately released his little trembling prisoner. Not long after, traversing the forest, in pursuit of his prey, he chanced to run into the toils of the hunters; from whence, not able to disengage himself, he set up a most hideous and loud roar. The mouse, hearing the voice, and knowing it to be the lion's, immediately repaired to the place, and bid him fear nothing, for that he was his friend. Then straight he fell to work, and with his little sharp teeth, gnawing asunder the knots and fastenings of the toils, set the royal brute at liberty.

The Application.—This Fable gives us to understand, that there is no person in the world so little, but even the greatest may, some time or other, stand in need of his assistance; and consequently that it is good to use clemency, where there is room for it, towards those who fall within our power. A generosity of this kind is a handsome virtue, and looks very graceful whenever it is exerted, if there were nothing else in it. But as the lowest people in life may, upon occasion, have it in their power either to serve or hurt us, that makes it our duty, in point of common interest, to behave ourselves with good-nature and lenity towards all with whom we have to do. Then the gratitude of the mouse, and his readiness not only to repay, but even to exceed the obligation due to his benefactor, notwithstanding his little body, gives us the specimen of a great soul which is never so much delighted as with an opportunity of showing how sensible it is of favours received.

XXXII.—THE FATAL MARRIAGE.

The lion aforesaid, touched with the grateful procedure of the mouse, and resolving not to be outdone in generosity by any wild beast whatsoever, desired his little deliverer to name his own terms, for that he might depend upon his complying with any proposal he should make. The mouse, fired with ambition at this gracious offer, did not so much consider what was proper for him to ask, as what was in the power of his prince to grant; and so presumptuously de-

manded his princely daughter, the young lioness, in marriage. The lion consented; but, when he would have given the royal virgin into his possession, she, like a giddy thing as she was, not minding how she walked, by chance set her paw upon her spouse, who was coming to meet her, and crushed her little dear to pieces.

THE APPLICATION.—This Fable seems intended to show us how miserable some people make themselves by a wrong choice, when they have all the good things in the world spread before them to choose out of. In short, if that one particular of judgment be wanting, it is not in the power of the greatest monarch upon earth, nor of the repeated smiles of fortune, to make us happy. It is the want or possession of a good judgment which oftentimes makes the prince a poor wretch, and the poor philosopher completely easy. Now the first and chief degree of judgment is to know one's self; to be able to make a tolerable estimate of one's own capacity, so as not to speak or undertake anything which may either injure or make us ridiculous: and yet (as wonderful as it is) there have been men of allowed good sense in particular, and possessed of all desirable qualifications in general, to make life delightful and agreeable, who have unhappily contrived to match themselves with women of a genius and temper necessarily tending to blast their peace. This proceeds from some unaccountable blindness; but when wealthy plebeians, of mean extraction, and unrefined education, as an equivalent for their money, demand brides out of the nurseries of our peerage, their being despised, or at least overlooked, is so unavoidable, unless in extraordinary cases, that nothing but a false taste of glory could make them enter upon a scheme so inconsistent and unpromising.

XXXIII.—THE DOG IN THE MANGER.

A DOG was lying in a manger full of hay; an ox, being hungry, came near and offered to eat of the hay; but the envious ill-natured cur, getting up and snarling at him, would not suffer him to touch it; upon which the ox, in the bitterness of his heart, said, "A curse light on thee, for a malicious wretch who will neither eat the hay thyself, nor suffer others to do it."

THE APPLICATION.—Envy is the most unnatural and unaccountable of all the passions. There is scarcely any other emotion of the mind, however unreasonable, but may have something said in excuse for it; and there are many weaknesses of the soul, which, notwithstanding the wrongness and irregularity of them, swell the

P. 42.

heart, while they last, with pleasure and gladness. But the envious man has no such apology as this to make; the stronger the passion is, the greater torment he endures, and subjects himself to a continual real pain, by only wishing ill to others. Revenge is sweet, though cruel and inhuman, and though it thirsts sometimes even for blood, yet may be glutted and satiated. Avarice is something highly monstrous and absurd; yet, as it is a desire after riches, every little acquisition gives it pleasure, and to behold and feel the hoarded treasure to a covetous man, is a constant uncloying enjoyment. But envy, which is an anxiety rising in our minds, upon our observing accomplishments in others which we want ourselves, can never receive any true comfort, unless in a deluge, a conflagration, a plague, or some general calamity that should befal mankind; for, as long as there is a creature living that enjoys its being happily within the envious man's sphere, it will afford nourishment to his distempered mind: but such nourishment as will make him pine and fret, and emaciate himself to nothing.

XXXIV.—THE HORSE AND THE STAG.

The stag, with his sharp horns, got the better of the horse, and drove him clear out of the pasture where they used to feed together. So the latter craved the assistance of man; and in order to receive the benefit of it, he suffered him to put a bridle into his mouth, and a saddle upon his back. By this way of proceeding, he entirely defeated his enemy: but was mightily disappointed, when, upon returning thanks, and desiring to be dismissed, he received this answer:—"No, I never knew before how useful a drudge you were: now I have found what you are good for, you may depend upon it I will keep you to it.

The Application.—This Fable is intended to caution us against consenting to anything that might prejudice our liberty. This is the best use and interpretation given of it by Horace, the best and most polite philosopher that ever wrote. After reciting the Fable, he applies it thus:—"This," says he, "is the case of him, who, dreading poverty, parts with that invaluable jewel, liberty; like a wretch as he is, he will be subject to a tyrant or some sort or other, and be a slave for ever; because his avaricious spirit knew not how to be contented with that moderate competency, which he might have possessed independent of all the world."

XXXV.—THE COUNTRY MOUSE AND THE CITY MOUSE.

An honest, plain, sensible country mouse is said to have entertained at his hole, one day, a fine mouse of the town. Having formerly been playfellows together, they were old acquaintances, which served as an apology for the visit. However, as master of the house, he thought himself obliged to do the honours of it, in all respects, and to make as great a stranger of his guest as he possibly could. In order to do this, he set before him a reserve of delicate gray peas and bacon, a dish of fine oatmeal, some parings of new cheese, and, to crown all with a dessert, a remnant of a charming mellow apple. In good manners he forbore to eat any himself, lest the stranger should not have enough ; but that he might seem to bear the other company, sat and nibbled a piece of wheaten straw very busily. At last, says the spark of the town, "Old crony, give me leave to be a little free with you : how can you bear to live in this nasty, dirty, melancholy hole here, with nothing but woods, and meadows, and mountains, and rivulets about you ? Do you not prefer the conversation of the world to the chirping of birds ; and the splendour of a court to the rude aspect of an uncultivated desert ? Come, take my word for it, you will find it a change for the better. Never stand considering, but away this moment. Remember we are not immortal, and therefore we have no time to lose. Make sure of to-day, and spend it as agreeably as you can, you know not what may happen to-morrow." In short, these and such like arguments prevailed, and his country acquaintance was resolved to go to town that night. So they both set out upon their journey together, proposing to sneak in after the close of the evening. They did so, and about midnight made their entry into a certain great house, where there had been an extraordinary entertainment the day before, and several tit bits which some of the servants had purloined were hid under the seat of a window. The country guest was immediately placed in the midst of a rich Persian carpet : and now it was the courtier's turn to entertain, who indeed acquitted himself in that capacity with the utmost readiness and address, changing the courses as elegantly, and tasting everything first as judiciously as any clerk of the kitchen. The other sat and enjoyed himself like a delighted epicure, tickled to the last degree with this new turn of his affairs ;

when, on a sudden, a noise of somebody opening the door made them start from their seats, and scuttle in confusion about the dining-room. Our country friend, in particular, was ready to die with fear at the barking of a huge mastiff or two, which opened their throats just about the same time, and made the whole house echo. At last, recovering himself, "Well," says he, "if this be your town life, much good may it do you; give me my poor quiet hole again, with my homely, but comfortable, gray peas."

THE APPLICATION.—A moderate fortune, with a quiet retirement in the country, is preferable to the greatest affluence which is attended with care and the perplexity of business, and inseparable from the noise and hurry of the town. The practice of the generality of people of the best taste, it is to be owned, is directly against us in this point; but when it is considered that this practice of theirs proceeds rather from a compliance with the fashion of the times, than their own private thoughts, the objection is of no force. Among the greater numbers of men who have received a learned education, how few are there but either have their fortunes entirely to make, or at least think they deserve to have, and ought not to lose the opportunity of getting somewhat more than their fathers have left them! The town is the field of action for volunteers of this kind; and whatever fondness they may have for the country, yet they must stay till their circumstances will admit of a retreat thither. But sure there never was a man yet, who lived in a constant return of trouble and fatigue in town, as all men of business do in some degree or other, but has formed to himself some end of getting a sufficient competency, which may enable him to purchase a quiet possession in the country, where he may indulge his genius, and give up his old age to that easy, smooth life, which in the tempest of business he had so often longed for. Can anything argue more strongly for a country life, than to observe what a long course of labour people go through, and what difficulties they encounter to come at it? They look upon it at a distance, like a kind of heaven, a place of rest and happiness, and are pushing forward through the rugged thorny cares, of the world, to make their way towards it. If there are many, who, though born to plentiful fortunes, yet live most part of their time in the noise, the smoke, and hurry of the town, we shall find, upon inquiry, that necessary indispensable business is the real or pretended plea which most of them have to make or it. The court and the senate require the attendance of some; law-suits and the proper directions of trade, engage others; they

who have a sprightly wit, and an elegant taste for conversation, will resort to the place which is frequented by people of the same turn, whatever aversion they may otherwise have for it; and others, who have no such pretence, have yet this to say, that they follow the fashion. They who appear to have been men of the best sense amongst the ancients, always recommend the country as the most proper scene for innocence, ease, and virtuous pleasure; and, accordingly, lose no opportunities of enjoying it: and men of the greatest distinction among the moderns have ever thought themselves most happy, when they could be decently spared from the employment which the excellency of their talents necessarily threw them into, to embrace the charming leisure of a country life.

XXXVI.—THE MOUSE AND THE WEASEL.

A LITTLE, starveling, thin-gutted rogue of a mouse, had, with much pushing and application, made his way through a small hole into a corn-basket, where he stuffed and crammed so plentifully, that when he would have retired the way he came, he found himself too plump, with all his endeavours, to accomplish it. A weasel, who stood at some distance, and had been diverting himself with beholding the vain efforts of the little fat thing, called to him and said, "Harkye! honest friend! if you have a mind to make your escape, there is but one way for it: contrive to grow as poor and lean as you were when you entered, and then, perhaps, you may get off."

THE APPLICATION.—They who, from a poor mean condition, insinuate themselves into a good estate, are not always the most happy. There is many times a quiet and content attending a low life to which the rich man is an utter stranger. Riches and cares are almost inseparable: and whoever would get rid of the one, must content himself to be divested of the other. He that hath been acquainted with the sweets of a life free from the incumbrance of wealth, and longs to enjoy them again, must strip himself of that incumbrance, if ever he means to attain his wishes.

Some, from creeping in the lowest stations of life, have in process of time filled the greatest places in it, and grown so bulky by pursuing their insatiable appetite after money, that when they would have retired, they found themselves too opulent and full to get off; there has been no expedient for them to creep out, till they were squeezed and reduced in some measure to their primitive littleness. They that fill themselves with that which is the

property of others, should always be so served before they are suffered to escape.

XXXVII.—THE BELLY AND THE MEMBERS.

In former days, when the belly and other parts of the body enjoyed the faculty of speech, and had separate views and designs of their own, each part, it seems, in particular for himself, and in the name of the whole, took exception at the conduct of the belly, and were resolved to grant him supplies no longer. They said, they thought it very hard that he should lead an idle, good-for-nothing life, spending and squandering away, upon his own ungodly guts, all the fruits of their labour; and that, in short, they were resolved for the future to strike off his allowance, and let him shift for himself as well as he could. The hands protested that they would not lift up a finger to keep him from starving; and the mouth wished he might never speak again, if he took in the least bit of nourishment for him as long as he lived; and, says the teeth, may we be rotten if ever we chew a morsel for him for the future. This solemn league and covenant was kept as long as anything of that kind can be kept, which was, until each of the rebel members pined away to skin and bone, and could hold out no longer. They then found there was no doing without the belly, and that as idle and insignificant as he seemed, he contributed as much to the maintenance and welfare of all the other parts, as they did to his.

The Application.—This Fable was spoken by Menenius Agrippa, a famous Roman consul and general, when he was deputed by the senate to appease a dangerous tumult and insurrection of the people. The many wars that nation was engaged in, and the frequent supplies they were obliged to raise, had so soured and inflamed the minds of the populace, that they were resolved to endure it no longer, and obstinately refused to pay the taxes which were levied upon them. It is easy to discern how the great man applied this Fable, for if the branches and members of a community refuse the government that aid which its necessities require, the whole must perish together. The rulers of a state, as idle and insignificant as they may sometimes seem, are yet as necessary to be kept up and maintained in a proper and decent grandeur as a family of each private person is in a condition suitable to itself. Every man's enjoyment of that little which he gains

by his daily labour, depends upon the government's being maintained in a condition to defend and secure him in it.

XXXVIII.—THE LARK AND HER YOUNG ONES.

A LARK, who had young ones in a field of corn which was almost ripe, was under some fear lest the reapers should come to reap it before her young brood were fledged, and able to remove from the place; wherefore, upon flying abroad to look for food, she left this charge with them, that they should take notice what they heard talked of in her absence, and tell her of it when she came back again. When she was gone, they heard the owner of the corn call to his son:—"Well," says he, "I think this corn is ripe enough: I would have you go early to-morrow, and desire our friends and neighbours to come and help us to reap it." When the old lark came home, the young ones fell a quivering and chirping round her, and told her what had happened, begging her to remove them as fast as she could. The mother bid them be easy, "for," says she, "if the owner depends upon friends and neighbours, I am pretty sure the corn will not be reaped to-morrow." Next day she went out again upon the same occasion, and left the same orders with them as before. The owner came and stayed, expecting those he had sent to; but the sun grew hot, and nothing was done, for not a soul came to help him. "Then," says he to his son, "I perceive these friends of ours are not to be depended upon, so that you must even go to your uncles and cousins, and tell them I desire they would be here betimes to-morrow morning, to help us to reap." Well, this the young ones in a great fright reported also to their mother. "If that be all," says she, "do not be frightened, children; for kindred and relations do not use to be so very forward to serve one another; but take particular notice what you hear the next time, and be sure to let me know it." She went abroad the next day as usual; and the owner, finding his relations as slack as the rest of his neighbours, said to his son, "Harkye, George, do you get a couple of good sickles ready against to-morrow morning, and we will even reap the corn ourselves." When the young ones told their mother this, "Then," says she, "we must be gone indeed; for when a man undertakes to do his business himself, it is not so likely he will be disappointed." So she removed her

young ones immediately, and the corn was reaped the next day by the good man and his son.

The Application.—Never depend upon the assistance of friends and relations in anything which you are able to do yourself, for nothing is more fickle and uncertain. The man who relies upon another for the execution of any affair of importance, is not only kept in a wretched and slavish suspense while he expects the issue of the matter, but generally meets with a disappointment; while he who lays the chief stress of his business upon himself, and depends upon his own industry and attention for the success of his affairs, is in the fairest way to attain his end; and if at last he should miscarry, has this to comfort him, that it was not through his own negligence, and a vain expectation of the assistance of his friends. To stand by ourselves as much as possible, to exert our own strength and vigilance in the prosecution of our own affairs, is godlike, being the result of a most noble and highly exalted reason; but they who procrastinate and defer the business of life by an idle dependence upon others, in things which it is in their power to effect, sink down into a kind of stupid and abject slavery, and show themselves unworthy of the talents with which human nature is dignified.

XXXIX.—THE NURSE AND THE WOLF.

A nurse, who was endeavouring to quiet a froward, bawling child, among other attempts threatened to throw it out of doors to the wolf if it did not leave off crying. A wolf, who chanced to be prowling near the door just at the time, heard the expression, and believing the woman to be in earnest, waited a long time about the house in expectation of seeing her words made good. But at last the child, wearied with its own importunities, fell asleep, and the poor wolf was forced to return back to the woods empty and supperless. The fox meeting him, and surprised to see him go home so thin and disconsolate, asked him what the matter was, and how he came to speed no better that night? "Ah! do not ask me," says he; "I was so silly as to believe what the nurse said, and have been disappointed."

The Application.—All the moralists have agreed to interpret this Fable as a caution to us never to trust a woman. What reasons they could have for giving so rough and uncourtly a precept is not easy to be imagined; for however fickle and unstable some women may be, it is well known there are several who have a greater regard for truth in what they assert or promise than

most men. There is not room in so short a compass to express a due concern for the honour of the ladies upon this occasion, nor to show how much one is disposed to vindicate them; and though there is nothing bad which can be said of them, but may with equal justice be averred of the other sex, yet one would not venture to give them so absolute a precaution as the old mythologists have affixed to this Fable, but only to advise them to consider well and thoroughly of the matter before they trust any man living.

XL.—THE TORTOISE AND THE EAGLE.

The tortoise, weary of his condition, by which he was confined to keep upon the ground, and being ambitious to have a prospect and look about him, gave out that if any bird would take him up into the air, and show him the world, he would reward him with a discovery of many precious stones which he knew were hidden in a certain place of the earth. The eagle undertook to do as he desired; and when he had performed his commission, demanded the reward: but finding the tortoise could not make good his words, he struck his talons into the softer parts of his body, and made him a sacrifice to his revenge.

The Application.—As men of honour ought to consider calmly how far the things which they promise may be in their power before they venture to make promises upon this account, because the non-performance of them will be apt to excite an uneasiness within themselves, and tarnish their reputation in the eyes of other people; so fools and cowards should be as little rash in this respect as possible, lest their impudent forgeries draw upon them the resentment of those whom they disappoint, and that resentment makes them undergo smart, but deserved chastisement. The man who is so stupid a knave as to make a lying promise where he is sure to be detected, receives the punishment of his folly unpitied by all that know him.

XLI.—THE WIND AND THE SUN.

A dispute once arose between the north wind and sun about the superiority of their power, and they agreed to try their strength upon a traveller, which should be able to get his cloak off first. The north wind began, and blew a very cold blast, accompanied with a sharp, driving shower; but this, and whatever else he could do, instead of making the man quit his cloak, obliged him to gird it about his body as close as possible. Next came the sun, who breaking out from a

thick watery cloud, drove away the cold vapours from the sky, and darted his warm sultry beams upon the head of the poor, weather-beaten traveller. The man, growing faint with the heat, and unable to endure it any longer, first throws off his heavy cloak, and then flies for protection to the shade of a neighbouring grove.

THE APPLICATION.—There is something in the temper of men so averse to severe and boisterous treatment, that he who endeavours to carry his point that way, instead of prevailing, generally leaves the mind of him whom he has thus attempted, in a more confirmed and obstinate situation than he found it at first. Bitter words and hard usage freeze the heart into a kind of obduracy, which mild persuasion and gentle language can only dissolve and soften. Persecution has always fixed and rivetted those opinions which it was intended to dispel; and some discerning men have attributed the quick growth of Christianity in a great measure to the rough and barbarous reception which its first teachers met with in the world. The same may have been observed of our reformation: the blood of the martyrs was the manure that produced that great Protestant crop, on which the Church of England has subsisted ever since. Providence, which always makes use of the most natural means to attain its purpose, has thought fit to establish the purest religion by this method; the consideration of which may give a proper check to those who are continually endeavouring to root out errors by that very management which so infallibly fixes and implants all opinions, as well erroneous as orthodox. When an opinion is so violently attacked, it raises an attention in the persecuted party, and gives an alarm to their vanity, by making them think that worth defending and keeping at the hazard of their lives, which perhaps, otherwise, they would only have admired a while for the sake of its novelty, and afterwards resigned of their own accord. In short, a fierce, turbulent opposition, like the north wind, only serves to make a man wrap his notions more closely about him; but we know not what a kind, warm, sunshiny behaviour, rightly applied, would not be able to effect.

XLII.—THE ASS IN THE LION'S SKIN.

AN ass, finding the skin of a lion, put it on, and going into the woods and pastures, threw all the flocks and herds into a terrible consternation. At last, meeting his owner, he would have frightened him also; but the good man, seeing his long ears stick out, presently knew him, and with a good cudgel made him sensible that, notwithstanding his being

dressed in a lion's skin, he was really no more than an ass.

The Application.—As all affectation is wrong, and tends to expose and make a man ridiculous, so the more distant he is from the thing which he affects to appear, the stronger will be the ridicule which he excites, and the greater the inconveniences into which he runs himself thereby. How strangely absurd is it for a timorous person to procure a military post, in order to keep himself out of danger! And to fancy a red coat the surest protection of cowardice! Yet there have been those who have purchased a commission to avoid being insulted; and have been so silly as to think courage was interwoven with a sash, or tied up in a cockade. But it would not be amiss for such gentlemen to consider that it is not in the power of scarlet cloth to alter nature; and that, as it is expected a soldier should show himself a man of courage and intrepidity upon all proper occasions, they may by this means meet the disgrace they intended to avoid, and appear greater asses than they need to have done. However, it is not in point of fortitude only that people are liable to expose themselves, by assuming a character to which they are not equal: but he who puts on a show of learning, of religion, of a superior capacity in any respect, or, in short, of any virtue or knowledge to which he has no proper claim, is, and will always be found to be, "an ass in a lion's skin."

XLIII.—THE FROG AND THE FOX.

A frog leaping out of the lake, and taking the advantage of a rising ground, made proclamation to all the beasts of the forest, that he was an able physician, and, for curing all manner of distempers, would turn his back to no person living. This discourse, uttered in a parcel of hard, cramp words, which nobody understood, made the beasts admire his learning, and give credit to everything he said. At last, the fox, who was present, with indignation asked him how he could have the impudence, with those thin lantern jaws, that meagre, pale phiz, and blotched spotted body, to set up for one who was able to cure the infirmities of others?

The Application.—A sickly, infirm look, is as disadvantageous in a physician, as that of a rake in a clergyman, or a sheepish one in a soldier. If this moral contains anything further, it is, that we should not set up for rectifying enormities in others, while we labour under the same ourselves. Good advice ought always to be followed, without our being prejudiced upon account of the

person from whom it comes. But it is seldom that men can be brought to think us worth minding, when we prescribe cures for maladies with which ourselves are infected. "Physician, heal thyself," is too scriptural not to be applied upon such an occasion, and if we would avoid being the jest of an audience, we must be sound and free from those diseases of which we would endeavour to cure others. How shocked must people have been to hear a preacher for a whole hour declaim against drunkenness, when his own infirmity has been such, that he could neither bear nor forbear drinking; and perhaps was the only person in the congregation who made the doctrine at that time necessary. Others, too, have been very zealous in exploding crimes, for which none were more suspected than themselves. But let such silly hypocrites remember, that they, whose eyes want couching, are the most improper people in the world to set up for oculists.

XLIV.—THE MISCHIEVOUS DOG.

A CERTAIN man had a dog, which was so curst and mischievous, that he was forced to fasten a heavy clog about his neck to keep him from running at and worrying people. This the vain cur took for a badge of honourable distinction, and grew so insolent upon it, that he looked down with an air of scorn upon the neighbouring dogs, and refused to keep them company. But a sly old poacher, who was one of the gang, assured him, that he had no reason to value himself upon the favour he wore, since it was fixed upon him rather as a mark of disgrace than of honour.

THE APPLICATION.—Some people are so exceedingly vain, and at the same time so dull of apprehension, that they interpret everything, by which they are distinguished from others, in their own favour. If they betray any weaknesses in conversation, which are apt to excite the laughter of their company, they make no scruple of ascribing it to their superiority in point of wit. If want of sense or breeding (one of which is always the case) disposes them to give or mistake affronts, upon which account all discreet, sensible people are obliged to shun their company, they impute it to their own valour and magnanimity, to which they fancy the world pays an awful and respectful deference. There are several decent ways of preventing such turbulent men from doing mischief, which might be applied with secrecy, and many times pass unregarded, if their own arrogance did not require the rest of mankind to take notice of it.

XLV.—JUPITER AND THE CAMEL.

THE camel presented a petition to Jupiter, complaining of the hardships of his case, in not having, like bulls and other creatures, horns, or any weapons of defence to protect himself from the attacks of his enemies; and prayed that relief might be given him in such manner as might be thought most expedient. Jupiter could not help smiling at the impertinent address of the great silly beast; but, however, rejected the petition, and told him, that so far from granting his unreasonable request, henceforward he would take care his ears should be shortened, as a punishment for his presumptuous importunity.

THE APPLICATION.—The nature of things is so fixed in every particular, that they are very weak and superstitious people who dream it is to be altered. But besides the impossibility of producing a change by addresses of this nature, they who employ much of their time upon such accounts, instead of getting, are sure to lose in the end. When any man is so frivolous and vexatious as to make unreasonable complaints, and to harbour undue repinings in his heart, his peevishness will lessen the real good which he possesses, and the sourness of his temper shorten that allowance of comfort which he already thinks too scanty. Thus, in truth, it is not Providence, but ourselves, who punishes our own importunity in soliciting for impossibilities, with a sharp corroding care, which abridges us of some part of that little pleasure which Providence has cast into our lot.

XLVI.—THE TRAVELLERS AND THE BEAR.

TWO men being to travel through a forest together, mutually promised to stand by each other in any danger they should meet upon the way. They had not gone far before a bear came rushing towards them out of a thicket: upon which one, being a light, nimble fellow, got up into a tree; the other, falling flat upon his face, and holding his breath, lay still while the bear came up and smelled at him; but that creature supposing him to be a dead carcase, went back again into the wood, without doing him the least harm. When all was over, the spark who had climbed the tree, came down to his companion, and with a pleasant smile, asked him what the bear had said to him, "for," says he, "I took notice that he clapped his mouth very close to your ear." —"Why," replies the other, "he charged me to take care

for the futnre, not to put any confidence in such cowardly rascals as you are."

THE APPLICATION.—Though nothing is more common than to hear people profess services of friendship where there is no occasion for them, yet scarce anything is so hard to be found as a true friend, who will assist us in time of danger and difficulty. All the declarations of kindness which are made to an experienced man, though accompanied by a squeeze of the hand, and a solemn asseveration, should leave no greater impression upon his mind than the whistling of the hollow breeze which brushes one's ear with an unmeaning salute, and is presently gone. He that succours our necessity by a well-timed assistance, though it were not ushered in by previous compliments, will ever after be looked upon as our friend and protector; and in so much a greater degree as the favour was unasked and unpromised; as it was not extorted by importunities on the one side, nor led in by a numerous attendance of promises on the other. Words are nothing till they are fulfilled by act:ons; and therefore we should not suffer ourselves to be deluded by a vain hope and reliance upon them.

XLVII.—THE BALD KNIGHT.

A CERTAIN knight, growing old, his hair fell off, and he became bald; to hide which imperfection, he wore a periwig: but as he was riding out with some others a hunting, a sudden gust of wind blew off the periwig, and exposed his bald pate. The company could not forbear laughing at the accident; and he himself laughed as loud as anybody, saying, "How was it to be expected that I should keep strange hair upon my head, when my own would not stay there?"

THE APPLICATION.—To be captious is not more uneasy to ourselves than it is disagreeable to others. As no man is entirely without faults, a few defects surrounded with a guard of good qualities, may pass muster well enough; but he whose attention is always upon the catch for something to take exception at, if he had no other bad quality, can never be acceptable. A captious temper, like a little leaven, sours a whole lump of virtues, and makes us disrelish that which might otherwise be the most grateful conversation. If we would live easy to ourselves, and agreeable to others, we should be so far from seeking occasions of being angry, that sometimes we should let them pass unregarded when they come in our way; or, if they are so palpable that we cannot help taking notice of them, we should do well to rally them

off with a jest, or dissolve them in good humour. Some people take a secret pleasure in nettling and fretting others; and the more practicable they find it to exercise this quality upon any one, the more does it whet and prompt their inclination to do it. But as this talent savours something of ill-nature, it deserves to be baffled and defeated: which one cannot do better, than by receiving all that is uttered at such a time with a cheerful aspect, and an ingenuous, pleasant, unaffected reply. Nor is the expedient of the bald knight unworthy of our imitation; for if, by any word or action, we happen to raise the laughter of those about us, we cannot stifle it sooner or better, than by a brisk presence of mind to join in mirth with the company, and if possible to anticipate the jest which another is ready to throw out upon the occasion.

XLVIII.—THE TWO POTS.

An earthen pot, and one of brass, standing together upon the river's bank, were both carried away by the flowing of the tide. The earthen pot showed some uneasiness, as fearing he should be broken; but his companion of brass bid him be under no apprehensions, "for that he would take care of him." "Oh," replies the other, "keep as far off as ever you can, I entreat you: it is you I am most afraid of; for whether the stream dashes you against me, or me against you, I am sure to be the sufferer, and therefore I beg of you, do not let us come near one another."

The Application.—A man of moderate fortune, who is contented with what he has, and finds he can live happily upon it, should take care not to hazard and expose his felicity by consorting with the great and the powerful. People of equal condition may float down the current of life without hurting each other; but it is a point of some difficulty to steer one's course in the company of the great, so as to escape without a bulge. One would not choose to have one's little country-box situated in the neighbourhood of a very great man: for whether I ignorantly trespass upon him, or he knowingly encroaches upon me, I only am likely to be the sufferer. I can neither entertain nor play with him upon his own terms; for that which is moderation and diversion to him, in me would be extravagance and ruin.

XLIX.—THE SHEPHERD'S BOY.

A certain shepherd's boy kept his sheep upon a common, and, in sport and wantonness, would often cry out, "The wolf! the wolf!" By this means he several times drew the

P. 58.

husbandmen in an adjoining field from their work, who, finding themselves deluded, resolved for the future to take no notice of his alarm. Soon after, the wolf came indeed; the boy cried out in earnest; but no heed being given to his cries, the sheep were devoured by the wolf.

The Application.—He that is detected for being a notorious liar, besides the ignominy and reproach of the thing, incurs this mischief, that he will scarce be able to get any to believe him again as long as he lives. However true our complaint may be, or how much soever it may be for our interest to have it believed, yet if we have been frequently caught tripping before, we shall hardly be able to gain credit to what we relate afterwards. Though mankind are generally stupid enough to be often imposed upon, yet few are so senseless as to believe a notorious lie, or to trust a cheat upon record. These little shams, when found out, are sufficiently prejudicial to the interest of every private person who practises them. But when we are alarmed with imaginary dangers in respect of the public, till the cry grows quite stale and threadbare, how can it be expected we should know when to guard ourselves against real ones?

L.—THE OAK AND THE REED.

An oak, which hung over the bank of a river, was blown down by a violent storm of wind; and as it was carried along by the stream, some of its boughs brushed against a reed, which grew near the shore. This struck the oak with a thought of admiration, and he could not forbear asking the reed how he came to stand so secure and unhurt in a tempest, which had been furious enough to tear an oak up by the roots? "Why," says the reed, "I secure myself by putting on a behaviour quite contrary to what you do; instead of being stubborn and stiff, and confiding in my strength, I yield and bend to the blast, and let it go over me, knowing how vain and fruitless it would be to resist."

The Application.—Though a tame submission to injuries which it is in our power to redress be generally esteemed a base and dishonourable thing, yet to resist where there is no probability, or even hopes, of our getting the better, may also be looked upon as the effect of a blind temerity, and perhaps of a weak understanding. The strokes of fortune are oftentimes as irresistible as they are severe; and he who, with an impatient, reluctant spirit, fights against her, instead of alleviating, does but double her blows upon himself. A person of a quiet, still temper, whether it is

given him by nature, or acquired by art, calmly composes himself in the midst of a storm, so as to elude the shock, or receive it with the least detriment; like a prudent, experienced sailor who is swimming to the shore from a wrecked vessel in a swelling sea, he does not oppose the fury of the waves, but stoops and gives way, that they may roll over his head without obstruction. The doctrine of absolute submission, in all cases, is an absurd, dogmatical precept, with nothing but ignorance and superstition to support it; but upon particular occasions, and where it is impossible for us to overcome, to submit patiently is one of the most reasonable maxims in life.

LI.—THE FOX AND THE TIGER.

A SKILFUL archer coming into the woods, directed his arrows so successfully, that he slew many wild beasts, and pursued several others. This put the whole savage kind into a fearful consternation, and made them fly to the most retired thickets for refuge. At last the tiger resumed a courage, and bidding them not be afraid, said, that he alone would engage the enemy, telling them they might depend upon his valour and strength to revenge their wrongs. In the midst of these threats, while he was lashing himself with his tail, and tearing up the ground for anger, an arrow pierced his ribs, and hung by its barbed point in his side. He set up a hideous and loud roar, occasioned by the anguish which he felt, and endeavoured to draw out the painful dart with his teeth; when the fox, approaching him, inquired with an air of surprise, who it was that could have strength and courage enough to wound so mighty and valorous a beast! "Ah," says the tiger, "I was mistaken in my reckoning; it was that invincible man yonder."

THE APPLICATION.—Though strength and courage are very good ingredients towards the making us secure and formidable in the world, yet, unless there be a proper portion of wisdom or policy to direct them, instead of being serviceable, they often prove detrimental to the proprietors. A rash, froward man, who depends upon the excellence of his own parts and accomplishments, is likewise apt to expose a weak side, which his enemies might not otherwise have observed, and gives an advantage to others by those very means which he fancied would have secured it to himself. Counsel and conduct always did, and always will, govern the world; and the strong, in spite of all their force, can never avoid being tools to the crafty. Some men are as much superior to others

in wisdom and policy, as man, in general, is above a brute. Strength, ill-concerted, opposed to them, is like a quarter-staff in the hands of a huge, robust, but bungling fellow, who fights against a master of the science. The latter, though without a weapon, would have skill and address enough to disarm his adversary, and drub him with his own staff. In a word, savage fierceness and brutal strength must not pretend to stand in competition with finesse and stratagem.

LII.—THE LION AND THE FOUR BULLS.

Four bulls, which had entered into a very strict friendship, kept always near one another, and fed together. The lion often saw them, and as often had a mind to make one of them his prey: but though he could easily have subdued any of them singly, yet he was afraid to attack the whole alliance, as knowing they would have been too hard for him, and therefore contented himself for the present with keeping at a distance. At last, perceiving no attempt was to be made upon them, as long as this combination held, he took occasion, by whispers and hints, to foment jealousies, and raise divisions among them. This stratagem succeeded so well, that the bulls grew cold and reserved to one another, which soon after ripened into a downright hatred and aversion, and at last ended in a total separation. The lion had now obtained his ends; and, as impossible as it was for him to hurt them while they were united, he found no difficulty, now they were parted, to seize and devour every bull of them, one after another.

The Application.—The moral of this Fable is so well known and allowed, that to go about to enlighten it would be like holding a candle to the sun. "A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand;" and as undisputed a maxim as it is, was however thought necessary to be urged to the attention of mankind by the best man that ever lived. And since friendships and alliances are of so great importance to our well-being and happiness, we cannot be too often cautioned not to let them be broken by tale-bearers and whisperers, or any other contrivance of our enemies.

LIII.—THE THIEVES AND THE COCK.

Some thieves entering a house with a design to rob it, when they were got in, found nothing worth taking but a cock, so they took and carried him off. But as they were about to kill him, he begged hard for his life, putting them in mind

how useful he was to mankind by crowing and calling them up betimes to their work. "You villain," replied they, "it is for that very reason we will wring your head off; for you alarm and keep people waking, so that we cannot rob at quiet for you."

THE APPLICATION.—The same thing which recommends us to the esteem of good people, will make those that are bad have but an ill opinion of us. It is in vain for innocent men under oppression to complain to those who are the occasion of it; all they can urge will but make against them, and even their very innocence, though they should say nothing, would render them sufficiently suspected. The advice, therefore, that this Fable brings along with it is, to inform us that there is no trusting, nor any hopes of living well with wicked unjust men. When vice flourishes and is in power, were it possible for a good man to live quietly in the neighbourhood of it, and preserve his integrity, it might be sometimes convenient for him to do so rather than quarrel with and provoke it against him. But, as rogues are ever irreconcilable enemies to men of worth, if the latter would be secure, they must take a method to free themselves from the power and society of the former.

LIV.—THE FORESTER AND THE LION.

THE forester meeting with a lion one day, they discoursed together for a while without differing much in opinion. At last a dispute happening to arise about the point of superiority between a man and a lion; and the man wanting a better argument, showed the lion a marble monument, on which was placed the statue of a man striding over a vanquished lion. "If this," says the lion, "is all you have to say for it, let us be the carvers, and we will make the lion striding over the man."

THE APPLICATION.—Contending parties are very apt to appeal for the truth to records written by their own side; but nothing is more unfair and at the same time insignificant and unconvincing. Such is the partiality of mankind in favour of themselves and their own actions, that it is almost impossible to come at any certainty by reading the accounts which are written on one side only. We have few or no memoirs come down to us of what was transacted in the world during the sovereignty of ancient Rome, but what were written by those who had a dependency upon it; therefore it is no wonder that they appear upon most occasions to have been so great and glorious a nation. What their contemporaries of other

countries thought of them we cannot tell, otherwise than from their own writers: it is not impossible but they might have described them as a barbarous, rapacious, treacherous, unpolite people, who upon their conquest of Greece, for some time made as great havoc and destruction of the arts and sciences as their fellow plunderers, the Goths and Vandals, did afterwards in Italy. What monsters would our own party-zealots make of each other, if the transactions of the times were to be handed down to posterity by a warm, hearty man on either side! And were such records to survive two or three centuries, with what perplexities and difficulties must they embarrass a young historian, as by turns he consulted them for the characters of his great forefathers! If it should so happen, it were to be wished this application might be living at the same time, that young readers, instead of doubting to which they should give their credit, would not fail to remember that this was the work of a man, that of a lion.

LV.—THE SATYR AND THE TRAVELLER.

A SATYR, as he was ranging the forest in an exceedingly cold, snowing season, met with a traveller half-starved with the extremity of the weather. He took compassion on him, and kindly invited him home to a warm comfortable cave he had in the hollow of a rock. As soon as they had entered and sat down, notwithstanding there was a good fire in the place, the chilly traveller could not forbear blowing his fingers' ends. Upon the satyr's asking him why he did so, he answered that he did it to warm his hands. The honest sylvan, having seen little of the world, admired a man who was master of so valuable a quality as that of blowing heat, and therefore was resolved to entertain him in the best manner he could, He spread the table before him with dried fruits of several sorts, and produced a remnant of cold cordial wine, which, as the rigours of the season made very proper, he mulled with some warm spices, infused over the fire, and presented to his shivering guest. But this the traveller thought fit to blow likewise; and upon the satyr's demanding a reason why he blowed again, he replied to cool his dish. This second answer provoked the satyr's indignation as much as the first had kindled his surprise; so taking the man by the shoulder, he thrust him out of doors, saying he would have nothing to do with a wretch who had so vile a quality as to blow hot and cold with the same mouth.

THE APPLICATION.—Though the poor traveller in the Fable

was not guilty of any real crime in what he did, yet one cannot help approving the honest simplicity of the satyr, who could not be reconciled to such double dealing. In the moral sense of the Fable, nothing can be more offensive to one of a sincere heart, than he that blows with a different breath from the same mouth; who flatters a man to his face, and reviles him behind his back. Some again, just like this man, to serve a present view, will blow nothing but what is warm, benevolent, and cherishing; and when they have raised the expectation of a dependent to a degree which they think may prove troublesome, can with putting on a cold air, easily chill and blast all his blooming hopes. But such a temper, whether it proceeds from a designed or natural levity, is detestable, and has been the cause of much trouble and mortification to many a brave, deserving man. Unless the tenor of a man's life be always true and consistent with itself, the less one has to do with him the better.

LVI.—HERCULES AND THE CARTER.

As a clownish fellow was driving his cart along a deep miry lane the wheels stuck so fast in the clay, that the horses could not draw them out. Upon this he fell a bawling and praying to Hercules to come and help him. Hercules, looking down from a cloud, bid him not lie there, like an idle rascal as he was, but get up and whip his horses stoutly, and clap his shoulder to the wheel; adding, that this was the only way for him to obtain his assistance.

The Application.—This Fable shows us how vain and ill-grounded the expectations of those people are, who imagine they can obtain whatever they want, by importuning Heaven with their prayers; for it is so agreeable to the nature of the Divine Being to be better pleased with virtuous actions and an honest industry, than idle prayers, that it is a sort of blasphemy to say otherwise. These were the sentiments of honest, good heathens, who were strangers to all revealed religion. But it is not strange that they should embrace and propagate such a notion, since it is no other than the dictate of common reason. What is both strange in itself, and surprising how it could be made so fashionable, is, that most of those whose reason should be enlightened by revelation, are very apt to be guilty of this stupidity, and by praying often for the comforts of life, to neglect that business which is the proper means of procuring them. How such a mistaken devotion came to prevail, one cannot imagine, unless from one of these two motives, either that people, by such a veil of hypocrisy, would pass

themselves upon mankind for better than they really are, or are influenced by unskilful preachers (which is sometimes, indeed too often, the case), to mind the world as little as possible even to the neglect of their necessary callings. No question but it is a great sin for a man to fail in his trade or occupation by running often to prayers, it being a demonstration in itself, though the Scripture had never said it, that we please God most when we are doing most good. And how can we do more good, than by a sober, honest industry, "to provide for those of our household," and to endeavour "to have to give to them that needeth." The man who is virtuously and honestly engaged, is actually serving God all the while, and is more likely to have his silent wishes, accompanied with strenuous endeavours, complied with by the Supreme Being, than he who begs with a fruitless vehemence, and solicits with an empty hand; a hand, which would be more religious were it usefully employed, and more devout were it stretched forth to do good to those that want it.

LVII.—THE MAN AND HIS GOOSE.

A CERTAIN man had a goose, which laid him a golden egg every day; but not contented with this, which rather increased than abated his avarice, he was resolved to kill the goose, and cut up her belly, so that he might come at the inexhaustible treasure which he fancied she had within her. He did so, and to his great sorrow and disappointment found nothing.

THE APPLICATION.—Those who are of such craving, impatient tempers, that they cannot live contented when Fortune hath blessed them with a constant and continued sufficiency, deserve even to be deprived of what they have. And this has been the case of many ambitious and covetous men, who by making an essay to grow very rich at once, have missed what they aimed at, and lost what they had before. But this comes so near the sense of the fourth Fable, that the same application may very well serve for both. If anything farther can be couched in this, it may possibly be intended to show us the unreasonableness and inconvenience of being solicitous about what may happen hereafter, and wanting to pry into the womb of futurity; which, if we could do, all we should get for our pains would be, to spoil our pleasures by anticipation, and double our misfortunes by previous sense and apprehension of them. There are some things that entertain and delight us very agreeably while we view them at a proper distance, which, perhaps, would not stand the test of a too-near inspection. Beauty, being

only the external form of a thing which strikes the eye in a pleasing manner, is a very thin glossy being, and like some nice painting of a peculiar composition, will not even bear to be breathed on. To preserve our good opinion of it, we must not approach too close; for if, like the man in the Fable, we have a mind to search for a treasure within, we may not only fail of our expectations there, but even lose the constant relish we enjoyed from a remoter contemplation.

LVIII.—THE WANTON CALF.

A calf, full of play and wantonness, seeing the ox at plough, could not forbear insulting him. "What a sorry poor drudge are you," says he, "to bear that heavy yoke upon your neck, and go all day drawing a plough at your tail to turn up the ground for your master! But you are a wretched dull slave, and know no better, or else you would not do it. See what a happy life I lead; I go just where I please; sometimes I lay down under the cool shade; sometimes I frisk about in the open sunshine; and, when I please, slake my thirst in the clear sweet brook; but you, if you were to perish, have not so much as a little dirty water to refresh you." The ox, not at all moved with what was said, went quietly and calmly on with his work, and in the evening was unyoked and turned loose. Soon after which he saw the calf taken out of the field, and delivered into the hands of a priest, who immediately led him to the altar, and prepared to sacrifice him. His head was hung round with fillets of flowers, and the fatal knife was just going to be applied to his throat, when the ox drew near and whispered him to this purpose:—"Behold the end of your insolence and arrogance; it was for this only you were suffered to live at all; and pray now, friend, whose condition is best, yours or mine?"

The Application.—To insult people in distress, is the property of a cruel, indiscreet, and giddy temper; for as the proceedings of Fortune are very irregular and uncertain, we may, the next turn of the wheel, be thrown down to their condition, and they be exalted to ours. We are likewise given to understand by this Fable, what the consequence of an idle life generally is, and how well satisfied laborious, diligent men are in the end, when they come quietly to enjoy the fruits of their industry. They, who by little tricks and sharping, or by open violence and robbery, live in a high, expensive way, often in their hearts at least despise the

poor, honest man, who is contented with the virtuous product of his daily labour, and patiently submits to his destiny. But how often is the poor man comforted by seeing those wanton villains led in triumph to the altar of justice, while he has many a cheerful summer's morning to enjoy abroad, and many a long winter's evening to indulge himself in at home, by a quiet hearth, and under an unenvied roof: blessings which often attend a sober, industrious man, though the idle and the profligate are utter strangers to them. Luxury and intemperance, besides their being certain to shorten man's days, are very apt, not only to engage people with their seeming charms into a debauched life, utterly prejudicial to their health, but to make them have a contempt for others, whose good sense and true taste of happiness inspire them with an aversion to idleness and effeminacy, and put them upon hardening their constitution by innocent exercise and laudable employment. How many do gluttony and sloth tumble into an untimely grave; while the temperate and active drink sober draughts of life, and spin out their thread to the most desirable length.

LIX.—THE LEOPARD AND THE FOX.

THE leopard, one day, took it into his head to value himself upon the great variety and beauty of his spots; and truly he saw no reason why even the lion should take place of him, since he could not show so beautiful a skin. As for the rest of the wild beasts of the forest, he treated them all, without distinction, in the most haughty, disdainful manner. But the fox being among them, went up to him, with a great deal of spirit and resolution, and told him that he was mistaken in the value he was pleased to set upon himself; since people of judgment were not used to form their opinion of merit from an outside appearance, but by considering the good qualities and endowments with which the mind was stored within.

THE APPLICATION.—How much more heavenly and powerful would beauty prove, if it were not unfrequently impaired by the affectation and conceitedness of its possessor! If some women were but as modest and unassuming as they are handsome, they might command the hearts of all that behold them. But Nature seemed to foresee, and has provided against such an inconvenience, by tempting its greatest master-pieces with a due proportion of pride and vanity; so that their power, depending upon the duration of their beauty only, is like to be but of a short continuance;

which, when they happen to prove tyrants, is no small comfort to us; and then, even while it lasts, will abate much of its severity by the alloy of those two prevailing ingredients. Wise men are chiefly captivated with the charms of the mind; and whenever they are infatuated with a passion for anything else, it is generally observed that they cease, during that time at least, to be what they were; and indeed are looked upon to be only playing the fool. If the fair ones we have been speaking of have a true ascendant over them, they will oblige them to divest themselves of common sense, and to talk and act ridiculously, before they can think them worthy of the least regard. Should one of these fine creatures be addressed in the words of Juba,

> 'Tis not a set of features or complexion,
> The tincture of a skin, that I admire;
> Beauty soon grows familiar to the lover,
> Fades in his eye, and palls upon the sense.
> The virtuous Marcia towers above her sex—
> True she is fair—oh, how divinely fair!
> But still the lovely maid improves her charms
> With inward greatness, unaffected wisdom,
> And sanctity of manners.

The man that should venture the success of a strong passion upon the construction she would put upon such a compliment, might have reason to repent of his conduct.

LX.—THE CAT AND THE FOX.

As the cat and the fox were talking politics together, on a time, in the middle of a forest, Reynard said, let things turn out ever so bad, he did not care, for he had a thousand tricks for them yet, before they should hurt him. "But pray," says he, "Mrs. Puss, suppose there should be an invasion, what course do you design to take?" "Nay," says the cat, "I have but one shift for it, and if that won't do, I am undone."—"I am sorry for you," replies Reynard, "with all my heart, and would gladly furnish you with one or two of mine; but indeed, neighbour, as times go, it is not good to trust; we must even be every one for himself, as the saying is, and so your humble servant." These words were scarce out of his mouth, when they were alarmed with a pack of hounds that came upon them in full cry. The cat, by the help of her single shift, ran up a tree, and sat securely among the top branches; from whence she beheld Reynard, who had not been able to get out of sight, overtaken with his

thousand tricks, and torn into as many pieces by the dogs which had surrounded him.

The Application.—A man that sets up for more cunning than the rest of his neighbours, is generally a silly fellow at the bottom. Whoever is master of a little judgment and insight into things, let him keep them to himself, and make use of them as he sees occasion; but he should not be teazing others with an idle and impertinent ostentation of them. One good, discreet expedient, made use of upon an emergency, will do a man more real service, and make others think better of him, than to have passed all along for a shrewd, crafty knave, and be bubbled at last. When any one has been such a coxcomb as to insult his acquaintance by pretending to more policy and stratagem than the rest of mankind, they are apt to wish for some difficulty for him to show his skill in: where, if he should miscarry (as ten to one but he does), his misfortune, instead of pity, is sure to be attended with laughter. He that sets up for a biter, as the phrase is, being generally intent upon his prey, or vain of showing his art, frequently exposes himself to the traps of one sharper than himself, and incurs the ridicule of those whom he designed to make ridiculous.

LXI.—THE PARTRIDGE AND THE COCKS.

A certain man having taken a partridge, plucked some of the feathers out of its wings, and turned it into a little yard where he kept game cocks. The cocks for a while made the poor bird lead a sad life, continually pecking and driving it away from the meat. This treatment was taken more unkindly, because offered to a stranger; and the partridge could not but conclude them the most inhospitable, uncivil people he had ever met with. But at last observing how frequently they quarrelled and fought with each other, he comforted himself with this reflection: that it was no wonder they were cruel to him, since there was so much bickering and animosity among themselves.

The Application.—This Fable comes home to ourselves; we of this island have always been looked upon as cruel to strangers. Whether there is anything in the manner of our situation as an island, which consequently can be no thoroughfare to other countries, and so is not made use of by strangers upon that account, which makes us thus shy and uncivil; or whether it be a jealousy on account of our liberties, which puts us upon being suspicious of, and unwilling to harbour any that are not members of the same community, perhaps it would not be easy to determine. But that

it is so in fact is too notorious to be denied, and probably can be accounted for no better way than from the natural bent of our temper, as it proceeds from something peculiar to our air and climate. It has been affirmed, that there is not in the whole world besides, a breed of cocks and dogs so fierce and incapable of yielding as that of ours; but that either of them, carried into foreign countries, would degenerate in a few years. Why may not the same be true of our men? But if strangers find any inconvenience in this, there is a comfortable consideration to balance it on the other side, which is, that there are no people under the sun so much given to division and contention among themselves as we are. Can a stranger think it hard to be looked upon with some shyness, when he beholds how little we spare one another? Was ever any foreigner, merely for being a foreigner, treated with half that malice and bitterness which differing parties express towards each other? One would willingly believe that this proceeds in the main, on both sides, from a passionate concern for our liberties and well-being; for there is nothing else that can so well excuse it. But it cannot be denied that our aversion, notwithstanding our being a trading nation, to have any intercourse with strangers is so great, that when we want other objects for our churlishness, we raise them up among ourselves; and there is sometimes as great a strangeness kept up between one county and another here, as there is between two distant kingdoms abroad. One cannot so much wonder at the constant hostilities which are observed between the inhabitants of South and North Britain, of Wales and Ireland, among one another; when a Yorkshireman shall be looked upon as a foreigner by a native of Norfolk; and both be taken for outlandish intruders by one that happens to be born within the bills of mortality.

LXII.—THE HUNTED BEAVER.

It is said that a beaver (a creature which lives chiefly in the water) has a certain part about him which is good in physic, and that, upon this account, he is often hunted down and killed. Once upon a time, as one of these creatures was hard pursued by the dogs, and knew not how to escape, recollecting with himself the reason of his being thus persecuted, with great resolution and presence of mind he bit off the part which his hunters wanted, and throwing it towards them, by these means escaped with his life.

The Application.—However it is among beasts, there are few human creatures but what are hunted for something else besides

either their lives, or the pleasure of hunting them. The Inquisition would hardly be so keen against the Jews, if they had not something belonging to them which their persecutors esteem more valuable than their souls; which whenever that wise but obstinate people can prevail with themselves to part with, there is an end of the chase for that time. Indeed, when life is pursued and in danger, whoever values it should give up everything but his honour to preserve it. And when a discarded minister is persecuted for having damaged the commonwealth, let him but throw down some of the fruits of his iniquity to the hunters, and one may engage for his coming off, in other respects, in a whole skin.

LXIII.—THE THUNNY AND THE DOLPHIN.

A fish, called a thunny, being pursued by a dolphin, and driven with great violence, not minding which way he went, was thrown by the force of the waves upon a rock, and left there. His death was now inevitable; but casting his eyes on one side, and seeing the dolphin in the same condition, lie gasping by him, "Well," says he, "I must die, it is true; but I die with pleasure, when I behold him who is the cause of it involved in the same fate."

The Application.—Revenge, though a blind, mischievous passion, is yet a very sweet thing; so sweet that it can even soothe the pangs, and reconcile us to the bitterness of death. And, indeed, it must be a temper highly philosophical that could be driven out of life by any tyrannical, unjust procedure, and not be touched with a sense of pleasure to see the author of it splitting upon the same rock. When this is allowed, and it is further considered how easily the revenge of the meanest person may be executed upon even the highest, it should, methinks, keep people upon their guard, and prevail with them not to persecute or be injurious to any one. The moral turpitude of doing wrong, is sufficient to influence every brave, honest man, and to secure him from harbouring even the least thought of it in his breast. But the knave and the coward should weigh the present argument, and before they attempt the least injury, be assured of this truth, that nothing is more sweet, nor scarce anything so easy to compass, as revenge.

LXIV.—THE HAWK AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

A nightingale, sitting all alone among the shady branches of an oak, sung with so melodious and shrill a pipe, that she made the woods echo again, and alarmed an hungry hawk,

who was at some distance off, watching for his prey; he had no sooner discovered the little musician, but making a stoop at the place, he seized her with his crooked talons, and bid her prepare for death. "Ah!" says she, "for mercy's sake, don't do so barbarous a thing, and so unbecoming yourself: consider, I never did you any wrong, and am but a poor small morsel for such a stomach as yours: rather attack some larger fowl which may bring you more credit and a better meal, and let me go."—"Ay," says the hawk, "persuade me to it if you can; I have been upon the watch all the day long, and have not met with one bit of anything till I caught you; and now you would have me let you go, in hopes of something better, would you? Pray who would be the fool then?"

The Application.—They who neglect the opportunity of reaping a small advantage in hopes they shall obtain a better, are far from acting on a reasonable and well-advised foundation. The figure of Time is always drawn with a single lock of hair hanging over his forehead, and the back part of his head bald; to put us in mind, that we should be sure to lay hold of an occasion, when it presents itself to us, lest afterward we repent of our omission and folly, and would recover it when too late. It is a very weak reason to give for our refusal of an offer of kindness, that we do it because we desire or deserve a better; for it is time enough to relinquish the small affair when the great one comes, if ever it does come. But supposing it should not, how can we forgive ourselves for letting anything slip through our hands, by vainly gaping after something else which we never could obtain? He who has not been guilty of any of these kind of errors, however poorly he may come off at last, has only the malice of fortune, or of somebody else, to charge with his ill success; he may applaud himself, with some comfort, in never having lost an opportunity, though ever so small, of bettering and improving his circumstances. Unthinking people have oftentimes the unhappiness to fret and teaze themselves with retrospects of this kind, which they, who attend to the business of life as they ought, never have occasion to make.

LXV.—THE HORSE AND THE LOADED ASS.

An idle horse, and an ass labouring under a heavy burden, were travelling the road together; they both belonged to a country fellow, who trudged it on foot by them. The ass, ready to faint under his heavy load, entreated the horse to assist him, and lighten his burden by taking some of it upon

P. 74.

his back. The horse was ill-natured, and refused to do it; upon which the poor ass tumbled down in the midst of the highway, and expired in an instant. The countryman ungirthed his pack-saddle, and tried several ways to relieve him, but all to no purpose: which, when he perceived, he took the whole burden and laid it upon the horse, together with the skin of the dead ass; so that the horse by his moroseness in refusing to do a small kindness, justly brought upon himself a greater inconvenience.

THE APPLICATION.—Self-love is no such ill principle if it were but well and truly directed, for it is impossible that any man should love himself to any purpose, who withdraws his assistance from his friends or the public. Every government is to be con sidered as a body politic; and every man who lives in it as a member of that body. Now, to carry on the allegory, no member can thrive better than when they all jointly unite their endeavours to assist and improve the whole. If the hand was to refuse its assistance in procuring food for the mouth, they must both starve and perish together. And when those who are parties concerned in the same community deny such assistance to each other, as the preservation of that community necessarily requires, their self-interestedness in that case is ill directed, and will have a quite contrary effect from what they intended. How many people are so senseless, as to think it hard that there should be any taxes in the nation! whereas, were there to be none indeed, those very people would be undone immediately; that little property they have would be presently plundered by foreign or domestic enemies; and then they would be glad to contribute their quota, even without an act of parliament. The charges of supporting a government are necessary things, and easily supplied by a due and well-proportioned contribution. But, in the narrower and more confined view, to be ready to assist our friends upon all occasions, is not only good, as it is an act of humanity, but highly discreet, as it strengthens our interest, and gives us an opportunity of lightening the burden of life.

LXVI.—THE OLD MAN AND DEATH.

A POOR feeble old man, who had crawled out into a neighbouring wood to gather a few sticks, had made up his bundle, and laying it over his shoulders, was trudging homeward with it: but, what with age, and the length of the way, and the weight of his burden, he grew so faint and weary that he sunk under it· and as he sat on the ground, he called

upon Death to come, once for all, and ease him of his troubles. Death no sooner heard him, but he came and demanded of him what he wanted. The poor old creature, who little thought Death had been so near, and frightened almost out of his senses with his terrible aspect, answered him trembling, that having by chance let his bundle of sticks fall, and being too infirm to get it up himself, he had made bold to call upon him to help him; that indeed this was all that he wanted at present; and that he hoped his worship was not offended with him for the liberty he had taken in so doing.

THE APPLICATION.—This Fable gives us a lively representation of the general behaviour of mankind towards that grim king of terrors, Death. Such liberties do they take with him behind his back, that, upon every little cross accident which happens in their way, Death is immediately called upon: and they even wish it might be lawful for them to finish by their own hands a life so odious, so perpetually tormenting, and vexatious. When, let but Death only offer to make his appearance, and the very sense of his near approach almost does the business. Oh, then all they want is a little longer life; and they would be glad to come off so well as to have their old burden laid upon their shoulders again. One may well conclude what an utter aversion they, who are in youth, health, and vigour of body, have to dying, when age, poverty, and wretchedness are not sufficient to reconcile us to the thought.

LXVII.—THE LION IN LOVE.

THE lion, by chance, saw a fair maid, the forester's daughter, as she was tripping over a lawn, and fell in love with her. Nay, so violent was his passion, that he could not live unless he made her his own; so that, without any more delay, he broke his mind to the father, and demanded the damsel for his wife. The man, as odd as the proposal seemed at first, yet soon recollected that by complying he might get the lion into his power; but, by refusing him, should only exasperate and provoke his rage; therefore he consented, but told him it must be upon these conditions: that, considering the girl was young and tender, he must agree to let his teeth be plucked out, and his claws cut off, lest he should hurt her, or at least frighten her with the apprehension of them. The lion was too much in love to hesitate; but was no sooner deprived of his teeth and claws, than the treacherous

forester attacked him with a huge club, and knocked his brains out.

The Application.—Of all the ill consequences that may attend upon that blind passion, love, seldom any prove so fatal as that one, of its drawing people into a sudden and ill-concerted marriage. They commit a rash action in the midst of a fit of madness, of which, as soon as they come to themselves, they may find reason to repent as long as they live. Many an unthinking young fellow has been treated as much like a savage in this respect as the lion in the Fable. He has, perhaps, had nothing valuable belonging to him but his estate and the writings which made his title to it; and if he is so far captivated as to be persuaded to part with these, his teeth and claws are gone, and he lies entirely at the mercy of madam and her relations. All the favour he is to expect after this is from the accidental goodness of the family he falls into; which, if it happen to be of a particular strain, will not fail to keep him in distant subjection, after they have stripped him of all his power. Nothing but a true friendship and a mutual interest can keep up reciprocal love between the conjugal pair; and when that is wanting, and nothing but contempt and aversion remain to supply the place, matrimony becomes a downright state of enmity and hostility. And what a miserable case he must be in, who has put himself and his whole power into the hands of his enemy, let those consider who, while they are in their sober senses, abhor the thoughts of being betrayed into their ruin, by following the impulse of a blind, unheeding passion.

LXVIII.—THE LIONESS AND THE FOX.

The lioness and the fox meeting together fell into discourse; and the conversation turning upon the breeding and fruitfulness of some living creatures above others, the fox could not forbear taking the opportunity of observing to the lioness, that for her part, she thought foxes were as happy in that respect as almost any other creature; for that they bred constantly once a year, if not oftener, and always had a good litter of cubs at every birth. And yet, says she, there are those who are never delivered of more than one at a time, and that, perhaps, not above once or twice in their whole life, who hold up their noses, and value themselves so much upon it, that they think all other creatures beneath them, and scarce worthy to be spoken to. The lioness, who all the while perceived at whom this reflection pointed, was fired with resentment, and, with a good deal of vehemence, re-

plied:—"What you have observed may be true, and that not without reason. You produce a great many at a litter, and often; but what are they? Foxes. I indeed have but one at a time, but you should remember that this one is a lion."

THE APPLICATION.—Our productions, of whatsoever kind, are not to be esteemed so much by the quantity, as the quality of them. It is not being employed much but well, and to the purpose, which makes us useful to the age we live in, and celebrated by those which are to come. As it is a misfortune to the countries which are infested with them, for foxes and other vermin to multiply, so one cannot help throwing out a melancholy reflection, when one sees some particulars of the human kind increase so fast as they do. But the obvious meaning of this Fable is the hint it gives us in relation to authors. These gentlemen should never attempt to raise themselves a reputation, by enumerating a catalogue of their productions, since there is more glory in having written one tolerable piece than a thousand indifferent ones. And whoever has had the good fortune to please in one performance of this kind, should be very cautious how he ventures his reputation in a second.

LXIX.—THE STAG AND THE FAWN.

A STAG, grown old and mischievous, was, according to custom, stamping with his foot, making offers with his head, and bellowing so terribly, that the whole herd quaked for fear of him; when one of the little fawns coming up, addressed him to this purpose:—"Pray, what is the reason that you, who are so stout and formidable at all other times, if you do but hear the cry of the hounds, are ready to fly out of your skin for fear?"—"What you observe is true," replied the stag, "though I know not how to account for it. I am indeed vigorous and able enough, I think, to make my part good anywhere, and often resolve within myself that nothing shall ever dismay my courage for the future. But, alas! I no sooner hear the voice of a hound, but all my spirits fail me, and I cannot help making off as fast as my legs can carry me."

THE APPLICATION.—This is the case of many a cowardly bully in the world. He is disposed to be imperious and tyrannical, and to insult his companions, and takes all opportunities of acting according to his inclinations; but yet is cautious where he makes his haunts, and takes care only to have to do with a herd of

rascally people, as vile and mean as himself. A man of courage quashes him with a word, and he who has threatened death in every sentence for a twelvemonth together, to those whom he knew it would affright, at the very frown of an intrepid man has leapt out of a window. It is no unpleasant sight to be present when any of these gentlemen happen to be disarmed of their terror before the face of their humbled admirers. There is a strange, boisterous struggle, betwixt fear, shame, and revenge, which blinds them with confusion; and though they would fain exert a little courage and show themselves men, yet they know not how, there is something within which will not suffer them to do it. The predominance of Nature will show itself upon occasion, in all its true colours, through all the disguises which artful men endeavour to throw over it. Cowardice, particularly, gives us but the more suspicion, when it would conceal itself under an affected fierceness; as they, who would smother an ill smell by a cloud of perfume, are imagined to be the more offensive. When we have done all, Nature will remain what she was, and show herself, whenever she is called upon; therefore whatever we do in contradiction to her laws, is so forced and affected, that it must needs expose, and make us ridiculous. We talk nonsense when we would argue against it, like Teague, who being asked why he fled from his colours, said, his heart was as good as any in the regiment, but protested his cowardly legs would run away with him, whatever he could do.

LXX.—THE YOUNG MAN AND THE SWALLOW.

A PRODIGAL young spendthrift, who had wasted his whole patrimony in taverns and gaming-houses, among lewd, idle company, was taking a melancholy walk near a brook. It was in the month of January, and happened to be one of those warm, sunshiny days, which sometimes smile upon us even in that wintry season of the year; and to make it the more flattering, a swallow, which had made its appearance, by mistake, too soon, flew skimming along upon the surface of the water. The giddy youth observing this, without any further consideration, concluded that summer was now come, and that he should have little or no occasion for clothes, so went and pawned them at the broker's, and ventured the money for one stake more among his sharping companions. When this, too, was gone the same way with the rest, he took another solitary walk in the same place as before. But the weather being severe and frosty, had made everything

look with an aspect very different from what it did before; the brook was quite frozen over, and the poor swallow lay dead upon the banks of it; the very sight of which cooled the young spark's brains, and coming to a kind of sense of his misery, he reproached the deceased bird as the author of all his misfortunes:—"Ah, wretch that thou wert," says he, "thou hast undone both thyself and me, who was so credulous as to depend upon thee."

The Application.—They who frequent taverns and gaming-houses, and keep bad company, should not wonder if they are reduced, in a very short time, to penury and want. The wretched young fellows, who once addict themselves to such a scandalous kind of life, scarce think of, or attend to any one thing besides. They seem to have nothing else in their heads, but how they may squander what they have got, and where they may get more when that is gone. They do not make the same use of their reason that other people do; but, like the jaundiced eye, view everything in that false light in which their distemper and debauchery represent it. The young man in the Fable gives us a pretty example of this; he sees a swallow in the midst of winter, and instead of being surprised at it as a very irregular and extraordinary thing, concludes from thence that it is summer, as if he had never thought before about the season. Well, the result of this wise conclusion is of a piece with the conclusion itself; if it is summer, he shall not want so many clothes, therefore he sells them. For what? More money to squander away; as if (had his observation been just) summer would have lasted all the year round. But the result and conclusion of this is:—When both his money and clothes are irrecoverably gone, he comes to his right senses, is ready to perish with hunger, to starve with cold, and to tear his own flesh with remorse and vexation at his former stupidity.

LXXI.—THE ANGLER AND THE LITTLE FISH.

A man who was angling in a river, caught a small perch, which, as he was taking off the hook, and going to put it into his basket, opened its mouth, and began to implore his pity, begging that he would throw it into the river again. Upon the man's demanding what reason he had to expect such a favour, "Why," says the fish, "because at present I am but young and little, and consequently not so well worth your while as I shall be, if you take me some time hence, when I am grown larger."—"That may be," replies the man, "but

I am not one of those fools who quit a certainty in expectation of an uncertainty."

The Application.—This Fable points much the same way as the sixty-fourth, so that one moral may very well serve for both. But the lesson they teach is so useful and instructive, that a repetition of it is by no means superfluous. The precept which they would instil into us, is, never to let slip the present opportunity, but to secure to ourselves every little advantage, just in the nick that it offers, without a vain reliance upon, and fruitless expectation of, something better in time to come. We may cheer up our spirits with hoping for that which we cannot at present obtain; but at the same time, let us be sure we give no occasion of condemning ourselves for omitting anything which it was in our power to secure.

LXXII.—THE ASS AND THE LION HUNTING.

The lion took a fancy to hunt in company with the ass; and to make him the more useful, gave him instructions to hide himself in a thicket, and then to bray in the most frightful manner that he could possibly contrive. "By this means," says he, "you will rouse all the beasts within the hearing of you; while I stand at the outlets, and take them as they are making off." This was done; and the stratagem took effect accordingly. The ass brayed most hideously; and the timorous beasts, not knowing what to make of it, began to scour off as fast as they could, when the lion, who was posted at a proper avenue, seized and devoured them as he pleased. Having got his belly full, he called out to the ass, and bid him leave off, telling him he had done enough. Upon this, the lop-eared brute came out of his ambush, and approaching the lion, asked him, with an air of conceit, "how he liked his performance?"—"Prodigiously!" says he, "you did it so well, that, I protest, had I not known your nature and temper, I might have been frightened myself."

The Application.—A bragging cowardly fellow may impose upon people that do not know him; but is the greatest jest imaginable to those who do. There are many men who appear very terrible and big in their manner of expressing themselves, and, if you could be persuaded to take their own word for it, are perfect lions; who, if one takes the pains to inquire a little into their true nature, are as arrant asses as ever brayed.

LXXIII.—THE SENSIBLE ASS.

An old fellow was feeding an ass in a fine green meadow and being alarmed with the sudden approach of the enemy, was impatient with the ass to put himself forward, and fly with all the speed that he was able. The ass asked him, "Whether or no he thought the enemy would clap two pair of panniers upon his back?" The man said, "No, there was no fear of that."—"Why then," says the ass, "I'll not stir an inch; for what is it to me who my master is, since I shall but carry my panniers as usual?"

The Application.—This Fable shows us how much in the wrong the poorer sort of people most commonly are, when they are under any concern about the revolutions of a government. All the alteration which they can feel is, perhaps, in the name of their sovereign, or some such important trifle. But they cannot well be poorer, or made to work harder than they did before. And yet how are they sometimes imposed upon and drawn in by the artifices of a few mistaken or designing men, to foment factions, and raise rebellions in cases where they can get nothing by the success; but, if they miscarry, are in danger of suffering an ignominious, untimely death.

LXXIV.—THE BOASTING TRAVELLER.

One who had been abroad, at his return home again was giving an account of his travels; and, among other places, said he had been at Rhodes, where he had so distinguished himself in leaping, an exercise that city was famous for, that not a Rhodian could come near him. When those who were present did not seem to credit this relation so readily as he intended they should, he took some pains to convince them of it by oaths and protestations; upon which, one of the company rising up, told him he need not give himself so much trouble about it, since he would put him in a way to demonstrate it in fact; which was to suppose the place they were in to be Rhodes, and to perform this extraordinary leap over again. The boaster, not liking this proposal, sat down quietly, and had no more to say for himself.

The Application.—It is very weak in all men, as well those who have travelled as those who have not, to be solicitous with their company to believe them, when they are relating a matter of fact, in which they themselves were a party concerned. For the more urgent a man appears at such a time, in order to gain credit,

the more his audience is apt to suspect the truth of what he relates. They perceive his vanity is touched more than his honour, and that it is his ability, not his veracity, which he cannot bear to have questioned. And, indeed, though a man was ever so fully satisfied of such a truth himself, he should consider that he is still as far from being able to convince others, as if he were altogether ignorant of it. Therefore, in all cases where proper vouchers are expected, we had better be contented to keep our exploits to ourselves, than to appear ridiculous by contending to have them believed. How much more, then, should travelled gentlemen have a care how they import lies and inventions of their own from foreign parts, and attempt to vend them at home for staple truths. Every time they utter a falsehood, they are liable not only to be suspected by the company in general, but to be detected and exposed by some particular person, who may have been at the same place, and, perhaps, know how to convict their forgery even to a demonstration.

LXXV.—THE BROTHER AND SISTER.

A CERTAIN man had two children, a son and a daughter; the boy beautiful and handsome enough, the girl not quite so well. They were both very young, and happened one day to be playing near the looking-glass, which stood on the mother's toilet. The boy, pleased with the novelty of the thing, viewed himself for some time, and in a wanton, roguish manner, took notice to the girl how handsome he was. She resented it, and could not bear the insolent manner in which he did it; for she understood it (as how could she do otherwise) intended for a direct affront to her. Therefore she ran immediately to her father, and, with a great deal of aggravation, complained of her brother, particularly for having acted so effeminate a part as to look in a glass, and meddle with things which belong to women only. The father, embracing them both with much tenderness and affection, told them "That he should like to have them both look in the glass every day, to the intent that you," says he to the boy, "if you think that face of yours handsome, may not disgrace and spoil it by an ugly temper, and a foul behaviour."—"You," says he, speaking to the girl, "that you may make up for the defects of your person, if there be any, by the sweetness of your manners, and the agreeableness of your conversation."

THE APPLICATION.—There is scarce anything we see in the

world, especially what belongs to and hangs about our own person, but is capable of affording us matter for some serious and useful consideration. And this Fable, notwithstanding the scene of it is laid at the very beginning and entrance of life, yet utters a doctrine worthy the attention of every stage and degree thereof from the child to the old man. Let each of us take a glass, and view himself considerately. He that is vain and self-conceited will find beauties in every feature, and his whole shape will be without fault. Let it be so; yet, if he would be complete, he must take care that the inward man does not detract from and disgrace the outward; that the depravity of his manners does not spoil his face, nor the wrongness of his behaviour distort his limbs; or, which is the same thing, make his whole person odious and detestable to the eyes of his beholders. Is any one modest in this respect, and deficient of himself? Or has he indeed blemishes and imperfections, which may depreciate him in the sight of mankind? Let him strive to improve the faculties of the mind, where perhaps Nature has not cramped him; and to excel in the beauties of a good temper and an agreeable conversation, the charms of which are so much more lasting and unalterably endearing than those of the other sort. They who are beautiful in person have this peculiar advantage, that, with a moderate regard to complaisance and good manners, that bespeaks every one's opinion in their favour. But then, be the outside of a man ever so rough and uncouth, if his acquired accomplishments are but sweet and engaging, how easily do we overlook the rest, and value him, like an oriental jewel, not by a glittering outside, which is common to baser stones, but by his intrinsic worth, his bright imagination, his clear reason, and the transparent sincerity of his honest heart.

LXXVI.—THE COLLIER AND THE FULLER.

THE collier and the fuller, being old acquaintances, happened upon a time to meet together; and the latter, being ill provided with a habitation, was invited by the former to come and live in the same house with him. "I thank you, my dear friend," replies the fuller, "for your kind offer, but it cannot be: for if I were to dwell with you, whatever I should take pains to scour and make clean in the morning, the dust of you and your coals would blacken and defile, as bad as ever, before night."

THE APPLICATION.—It is of no small importance in life to be cautious what company we keep, and with whom we enter into friendship; for though we are ever so well disposed ourselves,

and happen to be ever so free from vice and debauchery, yet, if those with whom we frequently converse are engaged in a lewd, wicked course, it will be almost impossible for us to escape being drawn in with them. If we are truly wise, and would shun those syren rocks of pleasure upon which so many have split before us, we should forbid ourselves all manner of commerce and correspondence with those who are steering a course which reason tells us is not only for our disadvantage, but would end in our destruction. All the virtue we can boast of will not be sufficient to insure us if we embark in bad company. For though our philosophy were such, as we could preserve ourselves from being tainted and infected with their manners, yet their character would twist and entwine itself with ours, in so intricate a fold, that the world would not take the trouble to unravel and separate them. Reputations are of a subtle, insinuating texture, like water; that which is derived from the clearest spring, if it chances to mix with a foul current, runs on undistinguished, in one muddy stream for the future, and must for ever partake of the colour and condition of its associate.

LXXVII.—THE FOX AND THE VIZOR-MASK.

A fox, being in a shop where vizor-masks were sold, laid his foot upon one of them, and considering it awhile attentively, at last broke out into this exclamation, "Bless me!" says he, "what a handsome goodly figure this makes! What a pity it is that it should want brains!"

The Application.—This is levelled at that numerous part of mankind who, out of their ample fortunes, take care to accomplish themselves with everything but common sense. In short, the whole world is a masquerade; and a man of tolerable talent for observation may entertain himself as well in the mixed assemblies he meets with in life, as the most magnificent and expensive revels provided and ordered for that purpose. Many of the faces one meets with among the gay frolicsome part of our species, if searched for brains, would appear as arrant vizors as that in the Fable.

LXXVIII.—THE TWO FROGS.

One hot sultry summer, the lakes and ponds being almost everywhere dried up, a couple of frogs agreed to travel together in search of water. At last they came to a deep well, and sitting upon the brink of it, began to consult whether they should leap in or not. One of them was for it, urging that there was plenty of clear spring water, and no danger

of being disturbed. "Well," says the other, "all this may be true, and yet I cannot come into your opinion for my life; for if the water should happen to dry up here too, how shall we get out again?"

The Application.—The moral of this Fable is intended to put us in mind "to look before we leap." That we should not undertake any action of importance, without considering first what the event of it is like to prove, and how we shall be able to come off upon such and such provisoes. A good general does not think he diminishes anything of his character when he looks forward beyond the main action, and concerts measures, in case there should be occasion for a safe retreat. How many unfortunate matches are struck up every day for want of this wholesome consideration! Profuse living, and extravagant gaming, both which terminate in the ruin of those that follow them, are mostly owing to a neglect of this precaution. Wicked counsellors advise, and ignorant princes execute those things, which afterwards they often dearly repent. Wars are begun by this blind stupidity, from which a state is not able to extricate itself with either honour or safety; and projects are encouraged by the rash accession of those who never considered how they were to get out, till they had plunged themselves irrecoverably into them.

LXXIX.—THE COVETOUS MAN.

A poor covetous wretch, who had scraped together a good parcel of money, went and dug a hole in one of his fields and hid it. The great pleasure of his life was to go and look upon his treasure once a day at least, which one of his servants observing, and guessing there was something more than ordinary in the place, came at night, found it, and carried it off. The next day, returning as usual to the scene of his delight, and perceiving it had been ravished away from him, he tore his hair for grief, and uttered the doleful complaints of his despair to the woods and meadows. At last a neighbour of his who knew his temper, overhearing him, and being informed of the occasion of his sorrow, "Cheer up, man!" says he, "thou hast lost nothing; there is the hole for thee to go and peep at still; and if thou canst but fancy thy money there, it will do just as well."

The Application.—Of all the appetites to which human nature is subject, none is so lasting, strong, and at the same time so unaccountable, as that of avarice. Our other desires generally cool and slacken at the approach of old age; but this flourishes

under gray hairs, and triumphs amidst impotence and infirmity. All other longings have something to be said in excuse for them, let them be at what time of life soever. But it is above reason, and therefore truly incomprehensible, why a man should be passionately fond of money only for the sake of gazing upon it. His treasure is as useless to him as a heap of oyster-shells; for though he knows how many substantial pleasures it is able to procure, yet he dares not touch it; and is as destitute of money, to all intents and purposes, as the man that is not worth a groat.

This is the true state of a covetous person; to which one of that fraternity may possibly make this reply—that when we have said all, since pleasure is the grand aim of all, if there arises a delight to some particular persons from the bare possession of riches, though they do not, nor ever intend to make use of them, we may be puzzled how to account for it, and think it very strange, but ought not absolutely to condemn the men who thus closely, but innocently, pursue what they esteem the greatest happiness. True; people would be in the wrong to paint covetousness in such odious colours, were it but compatible with innocence. But here arises the mischief: a truly covetous man will stick at nothing to attain his ends; and, when once avarice takes the field, honesty, charity, humanity, and, to be brief, every virtue which opposes it, is sure to be put to the rout.

LXXX.—THE EAGLE, THE CAT, AND THE SOW.

An eagle had built her nest upon the top branches of an old oak; a wild cat inhabited a hole in the middle; and in the hollow part at the bottom was a sow with a whole litter of pigs. A happy neighbourhood, and might have long continued so, had it not been for the wicked insinuations of the designing cat. For, first of all, up she crept to the eagle, and, "Good neighbour," says she, "we shall be all undone: that filthy sow yonder does nothing but lie rooting at the foot of the tree, and, as I suspect, intends to grub it up, that she may the more easily come at our young ones. For my part, I will take care of my own concerns, you may do as you please, but I will watch her motions, though I stay at home this month for it." When she had said this, which could not fail of putting the eagle into a great fright, down she went, and made a visit to the sow at the bottom; and putting on a sorrowful face, "I hope," says she, "you do not intend to go abroad to-day?"—"Why not?" says the sow. "Nay," replies the other, "you may do as you please; but I

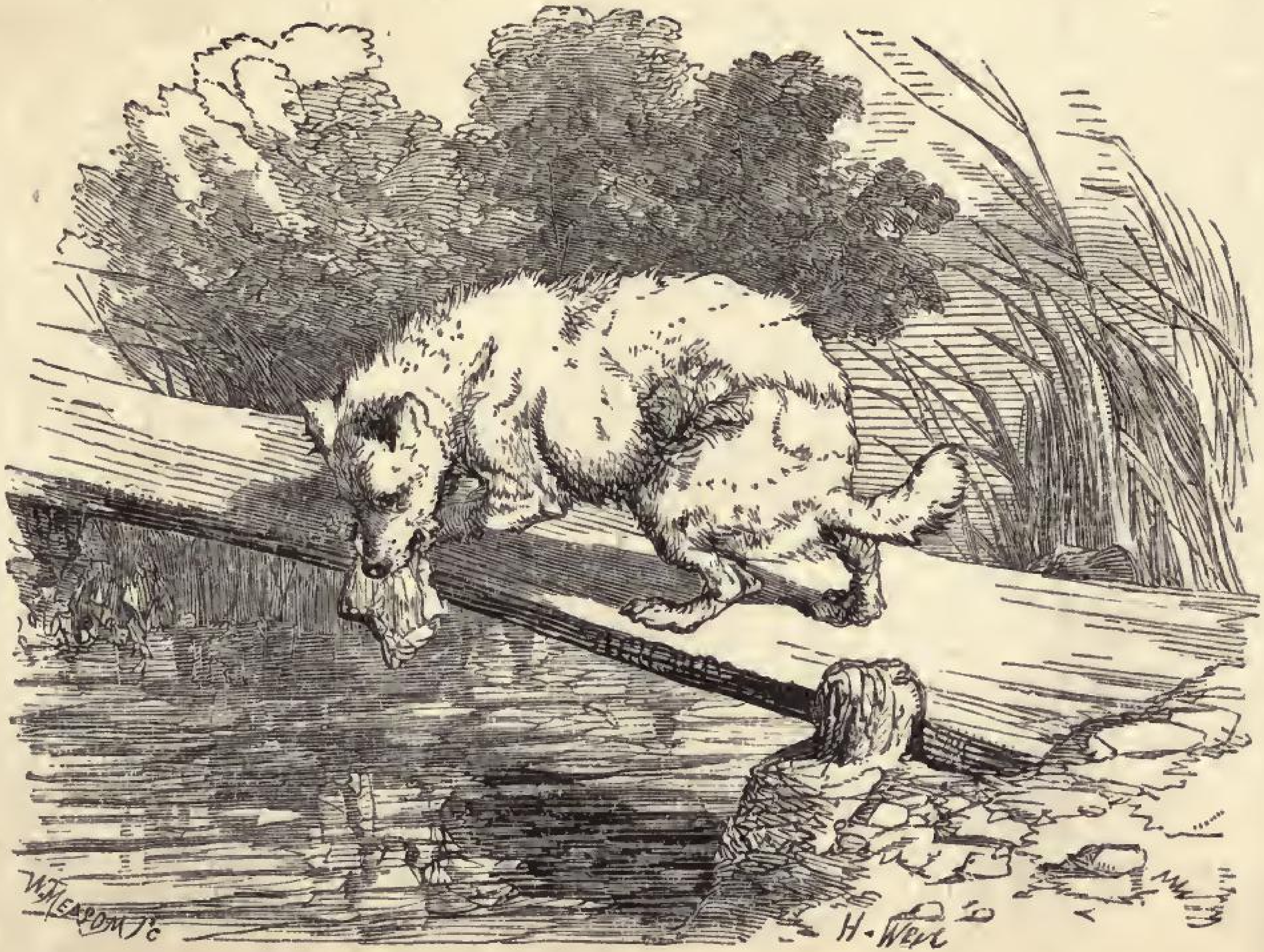
overheard the eagle tell her young ones, that she would treat them with a pig the first time she saw you go out; and I am not sure but she may take up a kitten in the meantime: so, good-morrow to you; you will excuse me, I must go and take care of the little folks at home." Away she went accordingly; and by contriving to steal out softly a-nights for her prey, and to stand watching and peeping all day at her hole, as under great concern, she made such an impression upon the eagle and the sow, that neither of them dared to venture abroad for fear of the other. The consequence of which was, that themselves and their young ones, in a little time, were all starved and made prizes of by the treacherous cat and her kittens.

THE APPLICATION.—This shows us the ill consequences which may attend the giving ear to a gossiping double-tongued neighbour. The mischiefs occasioned by such a credulity are innumerable, and too notorious not to be observed everywhere. Many sociable, well-disposed families, have been blown up into a perpetual discord and aversion to each other by one of these wicked go-betweens. So that, whoever would thoroughly acquit himself of the imputation of being a bad neighbour, should guard himself both against receiving ill impressions by hearsay, and uttering his opinion of others to those inquisitive busybodies, who, in case of scandal, can magnify a gnat to the size of a camel, and swell a mole-hill up to a mountain.

LXXXI.—THE DOG AND THE SHADOW.

A DOG, crossing a little rivulet, with a piece of flesh in his mouth, saw his own shadow represented in the clear mirror of the limpid stream; and believing it to be another dog, who was carrying another piece of flesh, he could not forbear catching at it; but was so far from getting anything by his greedy design, that he dropt the piece he had in his mouth, which immediately sunk to the bottom, and was irrecoverably lost.

THE APPLICATION.—He that catches at more than belongs to him, justly deserves to lose what he has. Yet nothing is more common, and, at the same time, more pernicious than this selfish principle. It prevails from the king to the peasant, and all orders and degrees of men are more or less infected with it. Great monarchs have been drawn in, by this greedy humour, to grasp at the dominion of their neighbours; not that they wanted anything more to feed their luxury, but to gratify their insatiable appetite



P. 90

for vain-glory. If the kings of Persia could have been contented with their own vast territories, they had not lost all Asia for the sake of a little petty state of Greece. And France, with all its glory, has, ere now, been reduced to the last extremity by the same unjust encroachments.

He that thinks he sees another's estate in a pack of cards, or a box of dice, and ventures his own in the pursuit of it, should not repine if he finds himself a beggar in the end.

LXXXII.—THE LION AND THE FROG.

The lion, hearing an odd kind of a hollow voice, and seeing nobody, started up: he listened again, and perceiving the voice to continue, even trembled and quaked for fear. At last, seeing a frog crawl out of the lake, and finding that the noise he had heard was nothing but the croaking of that little creature, he went up to it, and partly out of anger, partly contempt, spurned it to pieces with his feet.

The Application.—This Fable is a pretty image of the vain fears and empty terrors with which our weak, misguided nature is so apt to be alarmed and distracted. If we hear but ever so little a noise which we are not able to account for immediately, nay, often before we give ourselves time to consider about it, we are struck with fear, and labour under a most unmanly, unreasonable trepidation. More especially if the alarm happens when we are alone and in the dark. These notions are ingrafted in our minds very early; we suck them in with our nurse's milk; and therefore it is the more difficult, when we are grown up and ashamed of them, to root them out of our nature. But, in order to do it, it is well worth our while to observe, that the most learned and most ingenuous, and candid writers, in all ages, have ridiculed and exploded the belief of such phantoms, as the weaker part of mankind are apt to be terrified with; intimating, that goblins, spectres, apparitions, fairies, ghosts, &c., were invented by knaves, to frighten the fools with. Fear is a natural passion, and its use is to put us upon our guard against danger, by alarming the spirits. Now all passion should be kept in a state of subjection; for though they are good useful servants, yet if once they get the better, they prove the most domineering tyrants imaginable; nor do any of them treat us in so slavish and abject a manner as that of fear. It unnerves and enfeebles our limbs, precipitates or fetters our understanding; and, at the same time that it represents a danger near at hand, disarms, and makes us incapable of defending ourselves against it. This is the case, even in respect of real dangers,

as fire, thieves, or violent enemies: and even in this case, a man of either sense or honour would be ashamed to be detected in such a weakness. But when the cause of our alarm is groundless, and subsists nowhere but in our own childish imaginations, we should not only take care how we expose ourselves upon that account, but resolve to man our understanding with reason and fortitude enough to maintain it against the attacks of every little imaginary phantom. Even those who have thoroughly reasoned the point may yet retain something of the old woman in their minds, which having taken too deep root to be entirely plucked out, may sometimes surprise them in an unguarded moment, and make them start like the lion in the Fable; but then they presently recollect themselves, and as he did, treat the cause of their delusion with the utmost contempt.

LXXXIII.—THE FIR-TREE AND THE BRAMBLE.

A TALL, straight fir-tree, that stood towering up in the midst of the forest, was so proud of his dignity and high station, that he overlooked the little shrubs which grew beneath him. A bramble, being one of the inferior throng, could by no means brook this haughty carriage, and therefore took him to task, and desired to know what he meant by it. "Because," says the fir-tree, "I look upon myself as the first tree for beauty and rank of any in the forest; my spring top shoots up into the clouds, and my branches display themselves with a perpetual beauty and verdure; while you lay grovelling upon the ground, liable to be crushed by every foot that comes near you, and impoverished by the luxurious drippings which fall from my leaves."—"All this may be true," replies the bramble, "but when the woodman has marked you out for public use, and the sounding axe comes to be applied to your root, I am mistaken if you would not be glad to change conditions with the very worst of us."

THE APPLICATION.—If the great were to reckon upon the mischiefs to which they are exposed, and poor private men consider the dangers which they many times escape, purely by being so, notwithstanding the seeming difference there appears to be between them, it would be no such easy matter as most people think it, to determine which condition is the more preferable. A reasonable man would declare in favour of the latter without the least hesitation, as knowing upon what a steady and safe security it is established. For the higher a man is exalted, the fairer mark he

gives, and the more unlikely he is to escape a storm. What little foundation, therefore, has the greatest favourite of Fortune to behave himself with insolence to those below him; whose circumstances, though he is so elated with pride as to despise them, are, in the eye of every prudent man, more eligible than his own, and such as he himself, when the day of account comes, will wish he had never exceeded. For as the riches which many overgrown great ones call the goods of Fortune, are seldom any other than the goods of the public, which they have impudently and feloniously taken, so public justice generally overtakes them in the end, and whatever their life may have been, their death is as ignominious and unpitied as that of the meanest and most obscure thief.

LXXXIV.—THE BULL AND THE GOAT.

The bull being pursued by the lion, made towards a cave in which he designed to secure himself, but was opposed just at the entrance by a goat, who had got possession before him, and threatening a kind of defiance with his horns, seemed resolved to dispute the path with him. The bull, who thought he had no time to lose in a contest of this nature, immediately made off again, but told the goat that it was not for fear of him or his defiances; "for," says he, "if the lion were not so near, I would soon make you know the difference between a bull and a goat."

The Application.—It is very inhuman to deny succour and comfort to people in tribulation; but to insult them and add to the weight of their misfortunes, is something superlatively brutish and cruel. There is, however, in the world, a sort of wretches of this vile temper, that wait for an opportunity of aggravating their neighbour's affliction, and defer the execution of their evil inclinations until they can do it to the best advantage. If any one labours under an expensive lawsuit, lest he should escape from that, one of these gentlemen will take care to arrest him in a second action, hoping, at least, to keep him at bay, while the more powerful adversary attacks him on the other side. One cannot consider this temper without observing something remarkably cowardly in it; for these whiffling antagonists never begin the encounter till they are sure the person they aim at is already overmatched.

LXXXV.—THE FOWLER AND THE BLACKBIRD.

A fowler was placing his nets and putting his tackle in order by the side of a copse, when a blackbird who saw him

had the curiosity to inquire what he was doing? Says he, "I am building a city for you birds to live in; and providing it with meat, and all manner of conveniences for you." Having said this, he departed and hid himself; and the blackbird believing the words, came into the nets and was taken. But when the man came up to take hold of him, "If this," says he, "be your faith and honesty, and these the cities you build, I am of opinion you will have but few inhabitants."

The Application.—Methinks this fowler acted a part very like that which some rulers of the people do, when they tell them that the projects which they have contrived, with a separate view, and for their own private interests, are laid for the benefit of all that come into them. And to such the blackbird truly speaks when he affirms, that erectors of such schemes will find but few to stick by them at the long run. We exclaim against it as something very base and dishonest, when those of a different nation, and even our enemies, break the faith which they have publicly plighted, and tricked us out of our properties. But what must we call it, when governors themselves circumvent their own people, and, contrary to the terms upon which they are admitted to govern, contrive traps and gins to catch and ensnare them in. Such governors may succeed in their plot the first time, but must not be surprised if those who had once escaped their clutches never have opinion enough of them to trust them for the future.

LXXXVI.—JUPITER AND PALLAS.

Once upon a time the heathen gods had a mind to adopt each a particular tree into their patronage and tuition. Jupiter chose the oak; Venus was pleased to name the myrtle; Apollo pitched upon the laurel; Cybele took the pine, and Hercules the poplar; Pallas, being present, expressed her admiration at their fancy, in making choice of trees that bore nothing. "Oh," says Jupiter, "the reason of that is plain enough, for we would not be thought to dispense our favours with any mercenary view." "You may do as you please," says she, "but let the olive be my tree; and I declare my reason for choosing it is because it bears plenty of useful fruit." Upon which the Thunderer, putting on a serious, composed gravity, spoke thus to the goddess, "Indeed, daughter, it is not without justice that you are so celebrated for your wisdom; for unless some benefit attends

your actions, to perform them only for the sake of glory is but a silly business."

The Application.—This Fable is to put us in mind, that we should intend something useful and beneficial in all our actions. To undertake things with no other view but that of empty glory, whatever some curious dreamers may fancy, is employing our time after a very idle, foolish manner. The Almighty created the world out of his infinite goodness, for the good of his creatures, and not out of a passion for glory, which is a vain, silly, mean principle. And when we talk of glorifying the Author of our being, if we think reasonably, we must mean showing our gratitude to him, by imitating the goodness of his, as far as we are able, and endeavouring to make some good or other the aim of all our undertakings. For if empty glory be unworthy the pursuit of a wise man, how vastly improper must it be to make an offering of it to an All-wise Deity.

LXXXVII.—THE FOX AND THE BRAMBLE.

A fox, hard pressed by the hounds, was getting over a hedge, but tore his foot upon a bramble, which grew just in the midst of it; upon which he reproached the bramble for his inhospitable cruelty in using a stranger, who had fled to him for protection, after such a barbarous manner. "Yes," says the bramble, "you intended to have made me serve your turn, I know: but take this piece of advice with you for the future, never lay hold of a bramble again, as you tender your sweet person: for laying hold is a privilege that belongs to us brambles, and we do not care to let it go out of the family."

The Application.—Impertinent people, who are most apt to take liberties with others, are generally the most surprised if they are retorted upon with any severity, though they, of all people, have the least reason to expect quarter. It cannot but be pleasant to indifferent spectators when they see one of this fraternity meet with his match, and beaten with his own weapons. He that is known to be an ill man may be hurt unpitied; his misfortunes are conferred upon him to the satisfaction of him that occasions them; and we do not look upon him as an object of pity, but an example of justice. This Fable has an eye to a moral which has been already drawn from some others; and advises us to be cautious whom we lay hold on, or meddle with in too familiar a way; for those who can lay hold again, and perhaps are better qualified for it than ourselves, are carefully to be avoided.

LXXXVIII.—THE CAT AND THE MICE.

A CERTAIN house was much infested with mice; but at last they got a cat, who catched and eat every day some of them. The mice, finding their numbers grow thin, consulted what was best to be done for the preservation of the public from the jaws of the devouring cat. They debated, and came to this resolution, that no one should go down below the upper shelf. The cat, observing the mice no longer came down as usual, hungry and disappointed of her prey, had recourse to this stratagem; she hung by her hinder legs on a peg which stuck in the wall, and made as if she had been dead, hoping by this lure to entice the mice to come down. She had not been in this posture long, before a cunning old mouse peeped over the edge of the shelf, and spoke thus:—"Aha! my good friend, are you there? there may you be! I would not trust myself with you, though your skin were stuffed with straw."

THE APPLICATION.—Prudent folks never trust those a second time who have deceived them once. And indeed we cannot well be too cautious in following this rule; for, upon examination, we shall find that most of the misfortunes which befal us proceed from our too great credulity. They that know how to suspect, without exposing or hurting themselves, till honesty comes to be more in fashion, can never suspect too much.

LXXXIX.—THE FOX AND THE COUNTRYMAN.

A FOX, being hard hunted, and having run a long chase, was quite tired; at last he spied a country fellow in a wood, to whom he applied for refuge, entreating that he would give him leave to hide himself in his cottage till the hounds were gone by. The man consented, and the fox went and covered himself up close in a corner of the hovel. Presently the hunters came up, and inquired of the man if he had seen the fox? "No," says he, "I have not seen him indeed;" but all the while he pointed with his finger to the place where the fox was hid. However, the hunters did not understand him, but called off their hounds, and went another way. Soon after the fox, creeping out of his hole, was going to sneak off; when the man, calling after him, asked him if that was his manners, to go away without thanking his benefactor, to whose fidelity he owed his life? Reynard, who had peeped all the while, and seen what passed,

answered, "I know what obligations I have to you well enough; and I assure you, if your actions had been but agreeable to your words, I should have endeavoured, however incapable of it, to have returned you suitable thanks."

The Application.—Sincerity is a most beautiful virtue; but there are some whose natures are so poor spirited and cowardly, that they are not capable of exerting it. Indeed, unless a man be steady and constant in all his actions, he will hardly deserve the name of sincere. An open enemy, though more violent and terrible, is not, however, so odious and detestable as a false friend. To pretend to keep another's counsel, and appear in their interest, while underhand we are giving intelligence to their enemies, is treacherous, knavish, and base. There are some people in the world very dexterous at this kind of defamation; and can, while they seem most vehement in the commendation or defence of a friend, throw out a hint which shall stab their reputation deeper than the most malicious weapon, brandished at them in a public manner could have been capable of doing.

XC.—A MAN BIT BY A DOG.

A man, who had been sadly torn by a dog, was advised by some old woman, as a cure, to dip a piece of bread in the wound, and give it to the cur that bit him. He did so; and Æsop happening to pass by just at the time, asked him what he meant by it; the man informed him:—"Why then," says Æsop, "do it as privately as you can, I beseech you; for if the rest of the dogs of the town were to see you, we should all be eat up alive by them."

The Application.—Nothing contributes so much to the increase of roguery, as when the undertakings of a rogue are attended with success. If it were not for fear of punishment, a great part of mankind, who now make a shift to keep themselves honest, would appear great villains; but if criminals, instead of meeting with punishment, were, by having been such, to attain honour and preferment, our natural inclinations to mischief would be improved, and we should be wicked out of emulation.

XCI.—FORTUNE AND THE BOY.

A boy was sleeping by the side of a well. Fortune saw him, and came and waked him, saying, "Prithee, good child, do not lie sleeping here; if you should fall in nobody would impute it to you, but lay all the blame upon me, Fortune."

THE APPLICATION.—Poor Fortune has a great deal thrown upon her, indeed, and oftentimes very unjustly too. Those of our actions which are attended with success, though often owing to some accident or other, we ascribe, without any scruple, to some particular merit or good quality in ourselves; but when any of our doings miscarry, though probably through our own insufficiency or neglect, all the ill consequences are imputed to Fortune, and we acquit ourselves of having contributed anything towards it. The silliest part of each sex, when they dispose of themselves indiscreetly or disadvantageously in marriage, and having nothing else to say in excuse, cry out, "O there is a fate in everything, and there is no resisting fate," &c. But these people should take notice, that, as they have a very good proverb on their side, in relation to Fortune already, it is highly unreasonable in them to claim more than their share, and to ascribe the ill success of their own foolish negotiations to the management of Fortune. Probably the first occasion of confining the smiles of Fortune to people of this stamp, more particularly, might arise from the improbability of their succeeding by any art or right application of their own. And therefore, by an opposite rule, the wise and industrious only should be entitled to ill-luck, and have it in their power to charge Fortune with every loss and cross which befals them; for if, when they have concerted their measures judiciously, and been vigilant and active in their business, matters refuse still to answer expectation, they must be allowed to have very hard fortune; but fools have not the least right to take hold of this handle.

XCII.—THE MULE.

A MULE, which was well fed and worked little, grew fat and wanton, and frisked about very notably. "And why should not I run as well as the best of them?" says he, "It is well known I had a horse for my father, and a very good racer he was." Soon after this, his master took him out, and being upon urgent business, whipped and spurred the mule to make it put forward; who, beginning to tire upon the road, changed his note, and said to himself, "Ah! where is the horse's blood you boasted of but now? I am sorry to say it, friend, but indeed your worthy sire was an ass, and not a horse."

THE APPLICATION.—However high their blood may beat, one may venture to affirm those to be but mongrels and asses in reality who make a bustle about their genealogy. If some in the world should be vain enough to think they can derive their pedigree from

one of the old Roman families, and being otherwise destitute of merit, would fain draw some from thence, it might not be improper upon such an occasion to put them in mind, that Romulus, the first founder of that people, was base-born, and the body of his subjects made up of outlaws, murderers, and felons, the scum and off-scouring of the neighbouring nations, and that they propagated their descendants by rapes. As a man truly great shines sufficiently bright of himself, without wanting to be emblazoned by a splendid ancestry, so they whose lives are eclipsed by foulness or obscurity, instead of showing to advantage, look but the darker for being placed in the same line with their illustrious forefathers.

XCIII.—THE FOX AND THE APE.

Once upon a time, the beasts were so void of reason as to choose an ape for their king. He had danced and diverted them with playing antic tricks, and truly nothing would serve, but they must anoint him their sovereign. Accordingly crowned he was, and affected to look very wise and politic. But the fox, vexed at his heart to see his fellow-brutes act so foolishly, was resolved, the first opportunity, to convince them of their sorry choice, and punish their jackanapes of a king for his presumption. Soon after, spying a trap in a ditch, which was bated with a piece of flesh, he went and informed the ape of it, as a treasure, which, being found upon the waste, belonged to his majesty only. The ape, dreaming nothing of the matter, went very briskly to take possession ; but had no sooner laid his paws upon the bait, than he was caught in the trap ; where, betwixt shame and anger, he began to reproach the fox, calling him rebel and traitor, and threatening to be revenged of him ; at all which Reynard laughed heartily : and going off, added with a sneer, "You a king and not understand a trap !"

The Application.—A weak man should not aspire to be a king, for if he were, in the end it would prove as inconvenient to himself, as disadvantageous to the public. To be qualified for such an office, an office of the last importance to mankind, the person should be of distinguished prudence, and most unblemished integrity ; too honest to impose upon others, and too penetrating to be imposed upon ; thoroughly acquainted with the laws and genius of the realm he is to govern ; brave, but not passionate ; good-natured, but not soft ; aspiring at just esteem ; despising vain-glory ; without superstition ; without hypocrisy. When thrones have been filled by people of a different turn from this, histories

show what a wretched figure they always made; what tools they were to particular persons, and what plagues to their subjects in general. They who studied their passions, and entered into their foibles, led them by the nose as they pleased; and took them off from the guardianship of the public, by some paltry amusement, that themselves might have the better opportunity to rifle and plunder it.

XCIV.—THE MOLE AND HER DAM.

The young mole snuffed up her nose, and told her dam she smelt an odd kind of a smell. By-and-by "O strange!" says she, "what a noise there is in my ears, as if ten thousand paper-mills were going." A little after she was at it again:—"Look, look, what is that I see yonder? it is just like the flame of a fiery furnace." To whom the dam replied, "Prithee, child, hold your idle tongue: and if you would have us allow you any sense at all, do not affect to show more than Nature has given you."

The Application.—It is wonderful that affectation, that odious quality, should have been always so common and epidemical; since it is not more disagreeable to others, than hurtful to the person that wears it. By affectation, we aim at being thought to possess some accomplishment which we have not, or at showing what we have, in a conceited, ostentatious manner. Now this we may be assured of, that, among discerning people at least, when we endeavour at anything of this kind, instead of succeeding in the attempt, we detract from some real possession, and make qualities, that would otherwise pass well enough, appear nauseous and fulsome. Is it not ridiculous to see an old battered beau put himself to pain, that he may appear to tread firm, and walk strong and upright? A man, defective in his eyes, runs against a post, rather than confess he wants a guide? And one that is deaf, mistaking everything you say, rather than you should suspect he cannot hear? yet, perhaps, these things are done every day; and imitated in some other affectation, by the very people that laugh at them.

XCV.—THE FOX AND THE BOAR.

The boar stood whetting his tusks against an old tree. The fox, who happened to come by at the same time, asked him why he made those martial preparations of whetting his teeth, since there was no enemy near that he could perceive? "That may be, master Reynard," says the boar, "but we should scour up our arms while we have leisure, you

know; for in time of danger we shall have something else to do."

The Application.—He that is not idle when he is at leisure, may play with his business. A discreet man should have a reserve of everything that is necessary beforehand; that when the time comes for him to make use of them, he may not be in a hurry and a confusion. A wise general has not his men to discipline, or his ammunition to provide, when the trumpet sounds to arms, but sets apart his times of exercise for one, and his magazines for the other, in the calm seasons of peace. We hope to live to a good old age. Should we not, then, lay up a store of conveniences against that time, when we should be most in want of them, and least able to procure them? We must die—nay, never start! we must. Are there not some necessary things for us to transact before we depart; at least some trifle or other for us to bequeath, which a sudden stroke may prevent us from doing? Sure there is. And if so, how inexcusable shall we be, if we defer the execution of it till the alarm comes upon us. *I did not think of it*, is an expression unworthy of a wise man's mouth, and was only intended for the use of fools.

XCVI.—THE OLD WOMAN AND THE EMPTY CASK.

An old woman saw an empty cask lying, from which there had been lately drawn a piece of choice racy palm sack, the spirit of which yet hung about the vessel, and the very lee yielded a grateful cordial scent. She applied her nose to the bung-hole, and snuffing very heartily for some time, at last broke out into this exclamation:—"Oh! the delicious smell; how good, how charming good must you have been once, when your very dregs are so agreeable and refreshing!"

The Application.—Phædrus was an old man when he wrote his Fables, and this he applies to himself; intimating what we ought to judge of his youth, when his old age was capable of such productions. But sure this is a piece of vanity that diminishes some of the good savour of an agreeable old man; and it had been handsomer to have left us to make the application for him. It is, at once, a pleasing and melancholy idea, which is given us by the view of an old man, or woman, whose conversation is relishing and agreeable. We cannot forbear representing to ourselves how inexpressibly charming those must have been in the flower of youth, whose decay is capable of yielding us so much pleasure. Nor, at the same time, can we help repining, that this fountain of

delight is now almost dried up, and going to forsake us; and that the season in which it flowed in the greatest abundance was so long before we were acquainted with the world. It is no difficult matter to form a just notion of what the prime of any one's life was, from the spirit and flavour which remain even in the last dregs. Old age, merely as such, can never render a person either contemptible or disagreeable in the eye of a reasonable man; but such as we find people at that time of life, much the same they certainly were in those which they call their better days. As they that can make themselves agreeable, notwithstanding the disadvantage of old age, must have been highly entertaining in the vigour of youth; so, whenever we meet with one in years, whose humour is unpleasant, and manner burdensome, we may take it for granted, that, even in the prime of youth, such a one was troublesome, impertinent, and unsociable.

XCVII.—THE FOX AND THE CROW.

A crow having taken a piece of cheese out of a cottage window, flew up into a high tree with it, in order to eat it; which a fox observing, came and sat underneath, and began to compliment the crow upon the subject of her beauty. "I protest," says he, "I never observed it before, but your feathers are of a more delicate white than anything I ever saw in my life! Ah! what a fine shape and graceful turn of body is there! And I make no question but you have a tolerable voice! If it is but as fine as your complexion, I do not know a bird that can pretend to stand in competition with you." The crow, tickled with this very civil language, nestled and wriggled about, and hardly knew where she was; but thinking the fox a little dubious as to the particular of her voice, and having a mind to set him right in that matter, began to sing, and, in the same instant, let the cheese drop out of her mouth. This being what the fox wanted, he chopped it up in a moment, and trotted away, laughing to himself at the easy credulity of the crow.

The Application.—Those who love flattery (as it is to be feared too many do) are in a fair way to repent of their foible at the long run. And yet how few are there, among the whole race of mankind, who may be said to be full proof against its attacks! The gross way by which it is managed by some silly practitioners, is enough to alarm the dullest apprehension, and make it to value itself upon the quickness of its insight into the little plots of this nature. But let the ambuscade be disposed with due judgment,

P. 104.

and it will scarce fail of seizing the most guarded heart. How many are tickled to the last degree with the pleasure of flattery, even while they are applauded for their honest detestation of it! there is no way to baffle the force of this engine, but by every one's examining impartially for himself the true estimate of his own qualities: if he deals sincerely in the matter, nobody can tell so well as himself what degree of esteem ought to attend any of his actions; and, therefore, he should be entirely easy as to the opinion men are likely to have of them in the world. If they attribute more to him than is his due, they are either designing or mistaken; if they allow him less, they are envious, or, possibly, still mistaken; and, in either case, are to be despised or disregarded. For he that flatters without designing to make advantage of it, is a fool, and whoever encourages that flattery which he has sense enough to see through, is a coxcomb.

XCVIII.—THE OWL AND THE GRASSHOPPER.

An owl sat sleeping in a tree, but a grasshopper, who was singing beneath, would not let her be quiet, abusing her with very indecent and uncivil language, telling her she was a scandalous person who plied a-nights to get her living, and shut herself up all day in a hollow tree. The owl desired her to hold her tongue and be quiet, notwithstanding which she was the more impertinent. She begged of her a second time to leave off, but all to no purpose. The owl, vexed at the heart to find that all she said went for nothing, cast about to inveigle her by stratagem. "Well," says she, "since one must be kept awake, it is a pleasure, however, to be kept awake by so agreeable a voice, which I must confess is no ways inferior to the finest harp. And now I think of it, I have a bottle of excellent nectar, which my mistress Pallas gave me; if you have a mind, I will give you a dram to whet your whistle." The grasshopper, ready to die with thirst, and at the same time, pleased to be so complimented upon account of her voice, skipped up to the place very briskly; when the owl, advancing to meet her, seized, and, without much delay, made her a sacrifice to her revenge; securing to herself, by the death of her enemy, a possession of that quiet which during her life-time she could not enjoy.

The Application.—Humanity, or what we understand by common civility, is not a more necessary duty, than it is easy to practise. The man that is guilty of ill-manners, if he has been

bred to know what is meant by manners, must do violence to himself, as well as to the person he offends, and cannot be inhuman to others, without being cruel to his own nature. It has been observed, in the application to the Forty-seventh Fable, that people of captious tempers, being generally in the wrong in taking things ill, which were never so intended, are likely to be but the more persecuted, in order to be laughed out of their folly, and that not unjustly. But we must take care to distinguish; and when anything truly impertinent and troublesome has been said or done to another, not to repeat it, because he takes it ill, but immediately to desist from it: especially when he is so moderate as to make it his request two or three times, before he proceeds openly to take his course, and to do himself justice. This point should be well considered, for many quarrels of very ill consequence have been occasioned by a rash, unthinking persistence in the impertinent humour before mentioned. Some young people are fond of showing their wit and intrepidity, and therefore take such occasions to do it, and when a friend is peevish (as one may have a private cause for being so), they will not leave till they have rallied him out of it; no, though he entreats them ever so gravely and earnestly. Whereas, in truth, we have no right to be impertinent with one another to extremity; and though there is no law to punish such incivilities as I have been speaking of, they will scarce fail of meeting with a deserved and just chastisement some way or other.

XCIX.—THE ONE-EYED DOE.

A doe, that had but one eye, used to graze near the sea; and that she might be the more secure from harm, she kept her blind side towards the water, from whence she had no apprehension of danger, and with the other surveyed the country as she fed. By this vigilance and precaution she thought herself in the utmost security, when a sly fellow, with two or three of his companions, who had been poaching after her for several days to no purpose, at last took a boat, and fetching a compass upon the sea, came gently down upon her and shot her. The doe, in the agonies of death, breathed out this doleful complaint, "Oh hard fate! that I should receive my death's wound from that side whence I expected no ill, and be safe in that part where I looked for the most danger."

The Application.—Life is so full of accidents and uncertainties, that, with all the precaution we use, we can never be said to

be entirely free from danger. And though there is but one way for us to come into this world, the passages to let us out of it are innumerable. So that we may guard ourselves against the most visible and threatening ills, as much as we please, but shall still leave an unguarded side to a thousand latent mischiefs, which lie in ambush round about us. The moral, therefore, which such a reflection suggests to us, is to be neither too secure, nor too solicitous about the safety of our persons; as it is impossible for us to be always out of danger, so would it be unreasonable and unmanly to be always in fear of that which it is not in our power to prevent.

C.—THE RIVER FISH AND THE SEA FISH.

THE waters of a river being mightily swelled by a great flood, the stream ran down with a violent current, and cy its rapid force carried a huge barbel along with it into the sea. This fresh-water spark was no sooner come into a new climate, but he began to give himself airs, to talk big, and look with contempt upon the inhabitants of the place; he boasted that he was of a better country and family than any among them, for which reason they ought to give place to him, and pay him respect accordingly. A fine large mullet, that happened to swim near him, and heard his insolent language, bid him hold his silly tongue, for if they should be taken by fishermen, and carried to market, he would soon be convinced who ought to have the preference. "We," says he, "should be bought up at any price for the tables of the first quality, and you sold to the poor for little or nothing."

THE APPLICATION.—It proceeds from a want either of sense or breeding, or both, when foreigners speak slightly of the country they happen to be in, and cry up their own. It is, indeed, natural to have an affection for one's own native place; nor can we, perhaps, in our mind, help preferring it before any other; but it is certainly both imprudent and unmannerly to express this in another country, to people whose opinions it must needs contradict, by the same rule that it pleases our own. But, however, granting that there is a certain difference between countries, so as to make one greatly preferable, in the generality of opinions, to another, yet what has this to do with the merit of particular persons? Or why should any one value himself upon an advantage over others, which is purely owing to accident? It must be from some useful or agreeable talent in ourselves, that we are to merit the esteem of mankind: and if we shine in a superior degree of virtue or

wisdom, whatever our native air happened to be, virtuous and wise men of every nation under heaven will pay us the regard and the acknowledgments we deserve.

CI.—ÆSOP AT PLAY.

An Athenian one day found Æsop at play with a company of little boys, at their childish diversions, and began to jeer and laugh at him for it. The old fellow, who was too much a wag himself to suffer others to ridicule him, took a bow, unstrung, and laid it upon the ground. Then calling the censorious Athenian, "Now, philosopher," says he, "expound the riddle if you can, and tell us what the unstrained bow implies." The man, after racking his brains, and scratching his pate about it a considerable time, to no purpose, at last gave it up, and declared he knew not what to make of it. "Why," says Æsop, laughing, "if you keep a bow always bent, it will break presently; but if you let it go slack, it will be the fitter for use when you want it."

The Application.—The mind of man is like a bow in this respect; for if it be kept always intent upon business, it will either break and be good for nothing, or lose that spring and energy, which is required in one who would acquit himself with credit. But sports and diversions soothe and slacken it, and keep it in a condition to be exerted to the best advantage upon occasion. It proceeds either from pride, ill-nature, or hypocrisy, when people censure, and are offended at the liberties which others use, in thus relaxing their minds. Sloth and idleness, by which we neglect the prosecution of our necessary affairs, must be condemned by all means; but those who know how to despatch the proper business of life well and seasonably enough, need be under no apprehensions of being surprised at their diversions, if they have nothing dishonest in them. As these amusements ought to be allowed because they are proper, so it is no great matter how they are followed; we may, if we like it, as well play with children as men, and rather, if we find they can divert us better, which is not very seldom the case. Some men and women are useless and untractable in every circumstance of life, and some children so engaging and entertaining, with an agreeable undesigned mixture of innocence and cunning, that the company of the latter is, many times, the more preferable and diverting.

CII.—THE JACKDAW AND THE PIGEONS.

A jackdaw, observing that the pigeons in a certain dove-cot lived well, and wanted for nothing, whitewashed his fea-

thers, and endeavouring to look as much like a dove as he could, went and lived among them. The pigeons, not distinguishing him as long as he kept silent, forbode to give him any disturbance. But at last he forgot his character, and began to chatter; by which the pigeons, discovering what he was, flew upon him, and beat him away from the meat, so that he was obliged to fly back to the jackdaws again. They, not knowing him in his discoloured feathers, drove him away likewise, so that he who had endeavoured to be more than he had a right to, was not permitted to be anything at all.

THE APPLICATION.—The pretending to be of principles which we are not, either out of fear, or any prospect of advantage, is a very base, vile thing, and whoever is guilty of it, deserves to meet with ill treatment from all sorts and conditions of men. But the best of it is, there is no fear of such counterfeits imposing upon the world long, in a disguise so contrary to their own nature; let them but open their mouths, and like the daw in the Fable, they immediately proclaim their kind. If they should deceive for a while by appearing in an unquestionable place, or hanging out false colours, yet if touched upon the right string. they would be discovered in an instant; for when people are acting a wrong part, their very voice betrays them, they either cannot act their part sufficiently, or they over-act it; and whichever is the case, a man of discretion and honour will be sure to distinguish and to discountenance such pitiful impostors.

CIII.—THE SOW AND THE BITCH.

A sow and a bitch happening to meet, a debate arose between them concerning their fruitfulness. The bitch insisted upon it that she brought more at a litter and oftener than any other four-legged creature. "Ay," says the sow, "you do indeed, but you are always in so much haste about it, that you bring your puppies into the world blind."

THE APPLICATION.—"The more haste the worst speed," is a most excellent proverb, and worthy to be worn upon some conspicuous part of our dress or equipage, that it may give us a proper check when we go about anything of importance, which otherwise we might be apt to pursue with too much hurry and precipitation. It is no wonder our productions should come into the world blind, or lame, or otherwise defective, when by unnatural methods we accelerate their birth, and refuse to let them go their full time.

And if a hasty publication be such a crime, what must it be to brag and make profession of it in prefaces and dedications, as the practice of some is? Sure such writers fancy the world will admire their parts, when they endeavour thus to convince them how much they have wrote, and how little time and pains they have bestowed upon it. But, however, the advertisements and hints they give us of this kind may be so far useful, as to induce us to take them at their words, and spare ourselves the trouble of perusing a treatise, which they assure us beforehand is incorrect and faulty, through the idleness, impatience, or wilful neglect of the author.

CIV.—THE SPARROW AND THE HARE.

A HARE being seized by an eagle, squeaked out in a most woeful manner. A sparrow, that sat upon a tree just by, and saw it, could not forbear being unseasonably witty, but called out and said to the hare, "Soho! what, sit there and be killed? Prithee, up and away; I dare say, if you would but try, so swift a creature as you are would easily escape from the eagle." As he was going on with his cruel raillery, down came a hawk, and snapped him up, and notwithstanding his vain cries and lamentations, fell a devouring of him in an instant. The hare, who was just expiring, yet received comfort from this accident, even in the agonies of death, and addressing her last words to the sparrow, said, "You, who just now insulted my misfortunes with so much security, as you thought, may please to show us how well you can bear the like, now it has befallen you."

THE APPLICATION.—Nothing is more impertinent than for people to be giving their opinion and advice in cases in which, were they to be their own, themselves would be as much at a loss what to do. But so great an itch have most men to be directors in the affairs of others, either to show the superiority of their understanding, or their own security and exemption from the ills they would have removed, that they frowardly and conceitedly obtrude their counsel, even at the hazard of their own safety and reputation. There have been instances of those, who either officiously, or for the jest's sake, have spent much of their time in reading lectures of economy to the rest of the world, when, at the same time, their own ill-husbandry has been such, that they were forced to quit their dwellings, and take lodgings, while their goods were sold to make a composition for the debts they owed to petty tradesmen. Without giving more examples of this kind, of which every one

may furnish himself with enough from his own observation, we cannot but conclude, that none are greater objects of ridicule than they who thus merrily assume a character, which at the same time, by some incidents of their life, they convince us, of their being so unfit for.

CV.—CÆSAR AND THE SLAVE.

As Tiberius Cæsar was upon a progress to Naples once, he put in at a house he had upon the mountain Misenus, which was built there by Lucullus, and commanded a near view of the Tuscan Sea, having a distant prospect even of that of Sicily. Here, as he was walking in the gardens and wildernesses of a most delightful verdure, one of his domestic slaves, which belonged to that house, putting himself in a most alert posture and dress, appeared in one of the walks where the emperor happened to be, sprinkling the ground with a watering-pot, in order to lay the dust; and this he did so officiously that he was taken notice of, and even laughed at, for he ran through the private alleys and turnings, from one walk to another; so that, wherever the emperor went, he still found this fellow mighty busy with his watering-pot. But at last his design being discovered, which was, that he fancied Cæsar would be so touched with this diligence of his, as to make him free (part of which ceremony consisted in giving the slave a gentle stroke on one side of his face), his imperial majesty, being disposed to be merry, called him to him: and when the man came up, full of joyful expectations of his liberty—"Hark you, friend," said he, "I have observed that you have been very busy, in officiously meddling where you had nothing to do, while you might have employed your time better elsewhere; and therefore I must be so free as to tell you, that you have mistaken your man: I cannot afford a box on the ear at so low a price as you bid for it."

THE APPLICATION.—Phædrus tells us, upon his word, that this is a true story; and that he wrote it for the sake of a set of industrious idle gentlemen at Rome, who were harrassed and fatigued with a daily succession of care and trouble, because they had nothing to do; always in a hurry, but without business; busy to no purpose; labouring under a voluntary necessity, and taking abundance of pains to show they were good for nothing. But what great town or city is so entirely free from this sect, as to render the moral of this Fable useless anywhere? for it points at

all those officious good-natured people, who are eternally running up and down to serve their friends, without doing any good: who, by a complaisance wrong judged, or ill applied, displease, while they endeavour to oblige, and are never doing less to the purpose than when they are most employed. How many are there who think themselves entitled to good posts from government, only for having been dabblers in politics all their lives, to the neglect and prejudice of their proper callings! for never failing to inquire the news of the day of their acquaintance, and expressing a hearty satisfaction, or a deep concern, as the account given has affected them! There is another sort, who are so concerned lest you should find out that they are mere ciphers in life, that they overact their part, and are ever in a hurry, who appear at coffee-houses, and other public places, looking about eagerly for one with whom they have no business, and wanting to be asked to stay, that they may have an opportunity of telling you that they cannot possibly do it. People of this cast always subscribe their letters with, *Yours in great haste*, though they write to you because they have nothing else to do. In a word, this Fable is designed for the reformation of all those who endeavour to raise themselves merit and applause from a misapplied industry. It is not our being busy and officious that will produce us the esteem of men of sense, but the intending and contriving our actions to some noble useful purpose, and for the general good of mankind.

CVI.—THE SHEEP-BITER.

A CERTAIN shepherd had a dog, upon whose fidelity he relied very much; for whenever he had occasion to be absent him-self, he committed the care and tuition of his flock to the charge of this dog; and to encourage him to do his duty cheerfully, he fed him constantly with sweet curds and whey, and sometimes threw him a crust or two extra-ordinary. Yet, notwithstanding this, no sooner was his back turned, but the treacherous cur fell foul upon the flock, and devoured the sheep, instead of guarding and defending them. The shepherd, being informed of this, was resolved to hang him: and the dog, when the rope was about his neck, and he was just going to be tied up, began to expostulate with his master, asking him why he was so unmercifully bent against him, who was his own servant and creature, and had only committed one or two crimes; and why he did not rather execute revenge upon the wolf, who was a constant, open, and declared enemy? "Nay," replies the shepherd,

"it is for that very reason that I think you ten times more worthy of death than him; from him I expected nothing but hostilities, and therefore could guard against him; you I depended upon as a just and faithful servant, and fed and encouraged you accordingly; and therefore your treachery is the more notorious, and your ingratitude the more unpardonable."

THE APPLICATION.—No injuries are so bitter, and so inexcusable as those which proceed from men whom we trusted as friends, and in whom we placed a confidence. An open enemy, however inveterate, may overpower and destroy us, or perhaps may hurt and afflict us only in some measure; but as such a treatment cannot surprise us, because we expected no less, neither can it give us half the grief and uneasiness of mind which we are apt to feel when we find ourselves wronged by the treachery and falsehood of a friend. When the man whom we trusted and esteemed proves injurious to us, it is a calamity so cruelly complicated in its circumstances, that it involves us in grief of many folds, and multiplies the sum of our infelicity. At one and the same time, we find a foe where we least expected, and lose a friend when we most wanted him, which must be as severe and piercing as it is sudden and surprising. It is natural, therefore, for our resentment to be in proportion to our sense of such an injury: and that we should wish the punishment of so extraordinary a crime may be, at least, as great as that which usually attends an ordinary one.

CVII.—THE THIEF AND THE DOG.

A THIEF, coming to rob a certain house in the night, was disturbed in his attempts by a fierce vigilant dog, who kept barking at him continually. Upon which the thief, thinking to stop his mouth, threw him a piece of bread; but the dog refused it with indignation, telling him, that before he only suspected him to be a bad man, but now, upon his offering to bribe him, he was confirmed in his opinion: and that, as he was entrusted with the guardianship of his master's house, he should never cease barking while such a rogue as he lay lurking about it.

THE APPLICATION.—A man who is very free in his protestations of friendship, or offers of great civility upon the first interview, may meet with applause and esteem from fools, but contrives his schemes of that sort to little or no purpose in the company of men of sense. It is a common and known maxim to suspect an

enemy even the more for his endeavouring to convince us of his benevolence; because the oddness of the thing puts us upon our guard, and makes us conclude that some pernicious design must be couched under so sudden and unexpected a turn of behaviour. But it is no unnecessary caution to be upon the watch against even indifferent people, when we perceive them uncommonly forward in their approaches of civility and kindness. The man who at first sight makes us an offer which is due only to particular and well-acquainted friends, must be either a knave, and intends by such a bait to draw us into his net, or a fool, with whom we ought to avoid having any communication. Thus far the consideration of this Fable may be useful to us in private life: what it contains further in relation to the public is, that a man truly honest will never let his mouth be stopped with a bribe, but the greater the offer which is designed to buy his silence, the louder, and more constantly, will he open against the miscreants who would practise upon it.

CVIII.—THE HARPER.

A FELLOW that used to play upon his harp, and sing to it, in little alehouses, and made a shift, by the help of those narrow confined walls, to please the dull sots who heard him, from hence entertained an ambition of showing his parts upon the public theatre, where he fancied he could not fail of raising a great reputation and fortune in a very short time. He was accordingly admitted upon trial; but the spaciousness of the place, and the throng of the people, so deadened and weakened both his voice and instrument, that scarce either of them could be heard; and where they could it sounded so poor, so low, and wretched, in the ears of his refined audience, that he was universally exploded and hissed off the stage.

THE APPLICATION.—When we are commended for our performances by people of much flattery or little judgment, we should be sure not to value ourselves upon it; for want of which many a vain unthinking man has at once exposed and lost himself to the world. A buffoon may be very agreeable to a company disposed to be mirthful over a glass of wine, who would not be fit to open his mouth in a senate, or upon a subject where sound sense and a grave and serious behaviour are expected. It is not the diverting a little insignificant, injudicious audience or society, which can gain us a proper esteem, or insure our success, in a place which calls for a performance of the first rate; we should

have either allowed abilities to please the most refined tastes, or judgment enough to know that we want them, and to have a care how we submit ourselves to the trial. And, if we have a mind to pursue a just and true ambition, it is not sufficient that we study barely to please, but it is of the greatest moment whom we please, and in what respect; otherwise we may not only lose our labour, but make ourselves ridiculous into the bargain.

CIX.—THE TWO CRABS.

It is said to be the nature of a crab-fish to go backward; however, a mother crab one day reproved her daughter, and was in a great passion with her for her untoward, awkward gait, which she desired her to alter, and not to move in a way so contradictory to the rest of the world. "Indeed, mother," says the young crab, "I walk as decently as I can, and to the best of my knowledge; but if you would have me go otherwise, I beg you would be so good as to practise it first, and show me by your own example how you would have me behave myself."

The Application.—The man who is so impertinent as to rebuke others for a misbehaviour of which he himself is guilty, must be either a hypocrite, a senseless creature, or an impudent fellow. It is strange, that mankind, being so apt to act wrong in some particulars, should, at the same time, be so prone to calumny and detraction. One would think, that they who err so notoriously and frequently themselves, would be rather tender in concealing, than officious in carping at the faults of their fellow-sinners; especially considering that it is natural to be misled by our passions and appetites into some excess or other, but unnatural and inhuman to impeach others of miscarriages, of which ourselves are equally guilty. Granting it were ever so proper, or so much our duty to find fault with others, yet we must have a great share of impudence if we can bear to do it while we know ourselves liable to the same imputations. Example is a thousand times more instructive, or at least persuasive, than precept; for though the rules for virtue were even more pressing and numerous than they are, yet let but the fashion run upon vice, as it most commonly does, and you see how ready and comfortable the world shows itself to every part of it.

CX.—THE THIEF AND THE BOY.

A boy sat weeping upon the side of a well: a thief, happening to come by just at the same time, asked him why he

wept? The boy, sighing and sobbing, replied the string was broke, and a silver tankard was fallen to the bottom of the well. Upon this, the thief pulled off his clothes, and went down into the well to look for it, where having groped about a good while to no purpose, he came up again, and found neither his clothes nor the boy, that little arcn dissembler having run away with them.

THE APPLICATION.—However justice may be but little practised and pursued by particular men in the common course of their actions, yet every one readily agrees, that it ought to be kept up and enforced by the several penal laws, in respect to the public in general. Many a one can scarce forbear robbing and defrauding another when it is in his power to do it with impunity; but at the same time he dreads being robbed and defrauded again as much as if he were the most innocent man living, and is as secure in prosecuting the offenders; which proves that an unjust man is deliberately wicked, and abhors the crime in another which he dares commit himself. It is for this reason that the greater part of mankind like well enough to have punishment inflicted upon those who do wrong, and accordingly submit themselves to be governed peaceably and quietly by the laws of their country, upon the prospect of seeing justice executed upon all those who do them an injury. And however a tender nature may shrink at the sight, and commiserate the condition of a suffering malefactor, yet, in the main, we may observe, that people are pleased and satisfied when the sword of justice is unsheathed; and multitudes will even crowd to be spectators when the finishing stroke is given. But what affords us the greatest pleasure upon such occasions is, when we are entertained with a view of justice, acting, as it were, in person, and punishing cheats and tricksters, by making their own contrivances instrumental in it, and by ordering, as in the Fable, that their wickedness may fall upon their own head.

CXI.—MERCURY AND THE WOODMAN.

A MAN was felling a tree on the bank of a river, and by chance let his hatchet slip out of his hand, which dropt into the water and immediately sunk to the bottom. Being therefore in great distress for the loss of his tool, he sat down and bemoaned himself most lamentably. Upon this Mercury appeared to him, and being informed of the cause of his complaint, dived to the bottom of the river, and coming up again showed the man a golden hatchet, demanding if that was his. He denied that it was. Upon which

Mercury dived a second time, and brought up a silver one. The man refused it, alleging likewise that this was not his. He dived a third time, and fetched up the individual hatchet the man had lost; upon sight of which the poor wretch was overjoyed, and took it with all humility and thankfulness. Mercury was so pleased with the fellow's honesty, that he gave him the other two into the bargain, as a reward for his just dealing. The man goes to his companions, and giving them an account of what had happened, one of them went presently to the river's side, and let his hatchet fall designedly into the stream; then sitting down upon the bank, he fell a weeping and lamenting, as if he had been really and sorely afflicted. Mercury appeared as before, and diving, brought him up a golden hatchet, asking if that was the hatchet he lost. Transported at the sight of the precious metal, he answered yes, and went to snatch it greedily. But the god, detesting his abominable impudence, not only refused to give him that, but would not so much as let him have his own hatchet again.

The Application.—Notwithstanding the proneness of mankind to do evil, and the account which some find in playing the knave, yet there cannot be invented a more true and reasonable maxim, than that by which we are assured that "Honesty is the best policy." If we consider it in respect to the other world, there never was a religion but strictly required it of its votaries. If we examine it upon account of this, we shall find that the honest man, provided his other talents are not deficient, always carries the preference, in our esteem, before any other, in whatever business he thinks fit to employ himself.

CXII.—THE CREAKING WHEEL.

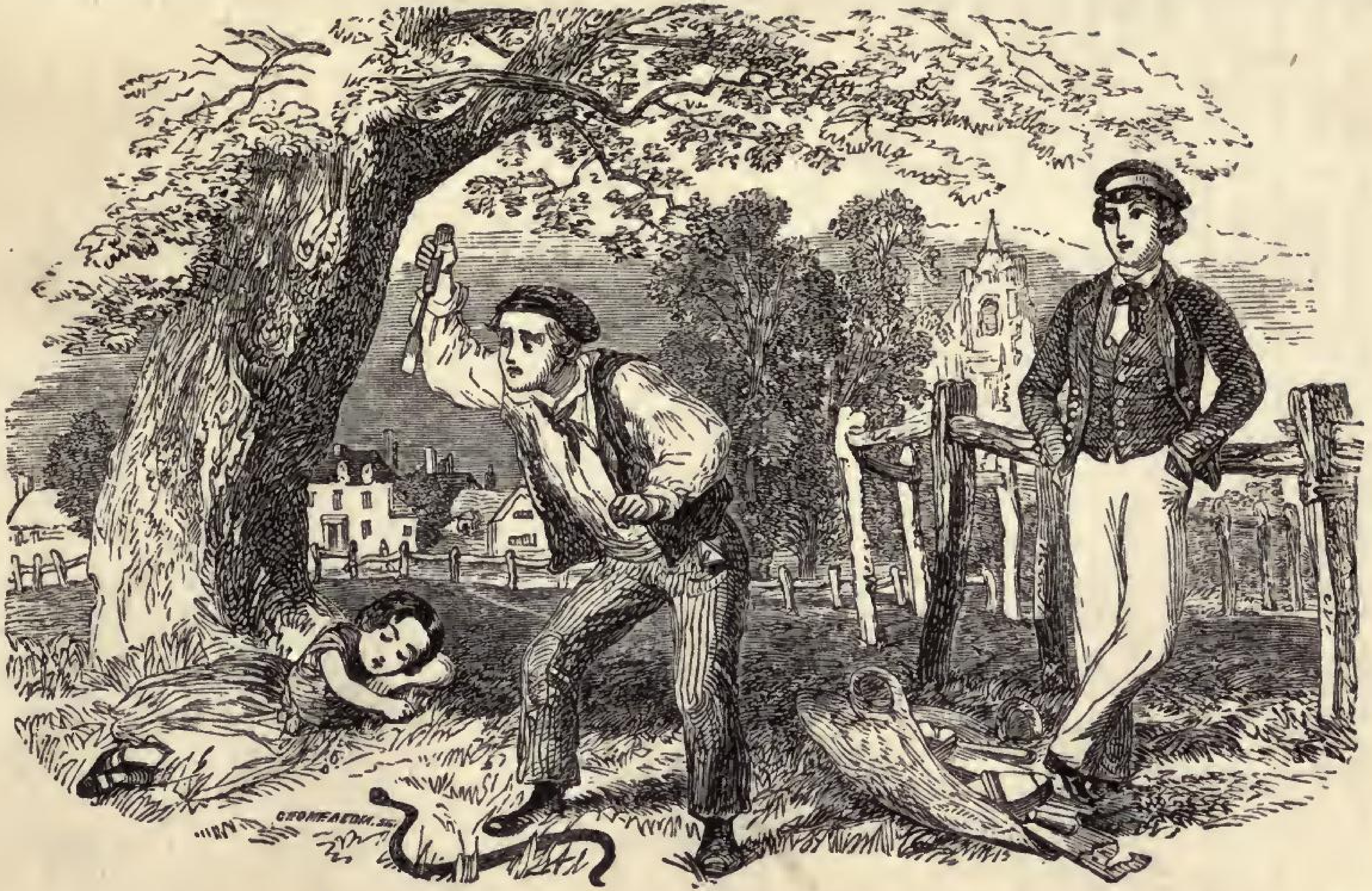
The coachman hearing one of the wheels of his coach creak, was surprised, but more especially when he perceived that it was the worst wheel of the whole set, and which he thought had but little pretence to take such a liberty. But, upon his demanding the reason why it did so, the wheel replied, that it was natural for people, who laboured under any affliction or infirmity, to complain.

The Application.—Though we naturally desire to give vent to the fulness of our heart, when it is charged with grief, and though by uttering our complaints we may happen to move the compassion of those that hear us, yet, everything considered, it is best to repress and keep them to ourselves; or, if we must let our

sorrow speak, to take care that it is done in solitude and retirement. What the poets mention as a usual thing with lovers, would not be amiss in those who are under any froward calamity, which cannot be kept quiet, to utter it to the woods and mountains, and to call the rocks and rivers to witness the cruelty of their destiny. That is, if they must show any weakness or impatience under the pressure of adverse fortune, to do it as privately as they can. For though the commiseration of a soft-headed person may be drawn forth sometimes by imparting the bitterness of our condition, yet the world will be apt to think us troublesome and importunate; and conclude, that if our hardships were so great as we would have people believe, we could not bear to think of them so frequently and abundantly as sometimes we do. But, besides, nothing is more generally true, than that it is much happier for us to share the envy, than the pity of mankind. And if the first of these is by no means eligible, if we could avoid it, how much more ought we to take care to give as little occasion as possible for the latter! Scarce any one is envied without possessing something valuable, or at least desirable; but we no sooner become objects of pity, than we are found out to be deficient in some respect or other, and perhaps unfit and unequal for the company and acquaintance with which we formerly conversed. Upon the whole, though we be pitied, we shall never be the more esteemed for being miserable; and if we can but appear happy, ten to one but we shall be beloved in course.

CXIII.—THE SERPENT AND THE MAN.

A CHILD was playing in the meadow, and by chance trod upon a serpent. The serpent, in the fury of his passion, turned up and bit the child with his poisonous teeth, so that he died immediately. The father of the child, inspired with grief and revenge, took a weapon in his hand, and pursuing the serpent before he could get into his hole, struck at him, and lopped off a piece of his tail. The next day, hoping by this stratagem to finish his revenge, he brought to the serpent's hole, honey, meal, and salt, and desired him to come forth, protesting that he only sought a reconciliation on both sides. However, he was not able to decoy the serpent forth, who only hissed from within to this purpose: "In vain you attempt a reconciliation; for as long as the memory of the dead child and the mangled tail subsists, it will be impossible for you and me to have any charity for each other."



P. 120.

The Application.—"The man who has injured you will never forgive you," is a Spanish proverb, and after their dry way a very good one. It seems odd at first sight, because one would think the backwardness to forgive should be on the side of him who has received the injury; but the truth of the maxim lies with much more certainty on the other side. The consciousness of having provoked the resentment of another will dwell so continually upon the mind of the aggressor, that he cannot rest till he has finished his work, and put it, as much as possible, out of his enemy's power to make any return upon him. Therefore, as the serpent wisely observes, it is in vain for two people, who have palpably injured each other, ever to expect to live well together for the future. Morality bids us forgive our enemies, and the voice of reason confirms the same; but neither reason nor morality bids us enter into a friendship with, or repose a confidence in, those who have injured us. We may resolve not to return ill-usage, but ought never to be forgiven, if, when we can prevent it, we put ourselves into our enemy's hands.

CXIV.—THE KID AND THE WOLF.

A kid being mounted upon the roof of a shed, and seeing a wolf below, loaded him with all manner of reproaches. Upon which the wolf, looking up, replied, "Do not value yourself, vain creature, upon thinking you mortify me, for I look upon this ill language as not coming from you, but from the place which protects you."

The Application.—To rail and give ill language is very unbecoming, not only in gentlemen in particular, but men in general. Nor can we easily determine whether courage or manners are most wanting in the person who is given to use it. Now when any one is so screened and protected by the place he is in that he may commit such indecencies with impunity, however his carcase may escape scot-free, yet he is sure to pay for it in his reputation; it being impossible we should think him a man of honour who endeavours to wound us from the advantage of the place in which he happens to be, and refuses to engage us upon equal terms. Whenever, therefore, we are attacked by one, whom the company we are in, or some other circumstance, makes it improper or impracticable for us to come at, let us wisely curb our passions of resentment by considering that it is not the silly person who speaks, but some situation by which he is secured that utters the reproach against us. The same reflection may serve also to divert, instead of exasperating us at the impotent malice of those poor spirits.

who, at the same time that they take the advantage of a place to brandish their infamous tongues against us, show how much they fear us, and that they durst not do it unless they knew themselves to be out of the reach of our resentment.

CXV.—THE JUDICIOUS LION.

A LION having taken a young bullock, stood over, and was just going to devour it, when a thief stept in and cried halves with him. "No, friend," says the lion, "you are too apt to take what is not your due, and therefore I shall have nothing to say to you." By chance a poor honest traveller happened to come that way, and seeing the lion, modestly and timorously withdrew, intending to go another way; upon which the generous beast, with a courteous, affable behaviour, desired him to come forward, and partake with him in that to which his modesty and humility had given him so good a title. Then dividing the prey into two equal parts, and feasting himself upon one of them, he retired into the woods, and left the place clear for the honest man to come in and take his share.

THE APPLICATION.—There is no one but will readily allow this behaviour of the lion to have been commendable and just: notwithstanding which, greediness and importunity never fail to thrive and attain their ends, while modesty starves, and is for ever poor. Nothing is more disagreeable to quiet reasonable men, than those that are petulant, forward, and craving, in soliciting for their favours: and yet favours are seldom bestowed but upon such as have extorted them by these teasing offensive means. Every patron, when he speaks his real thoughts, is ready to acknowledge that the modest man has the best title to his esteem; yet he suffers himself, too often, to be prevailed upon, merely by outrageous noise, to give that to a shameless, assuming fellow, which he knows to be justly due to the silent, unapplying, modest man. It would be a laudable thing in a man in power to make a resolution not to confer any advantageous post upon the person that asks for it, as it would free him from importunity, and afford him a quiet leisure, upon any vacancy, either to consider with himself, who had deserved best of their country, or to inquire and be informed by those whom he could trust. But as this is seldom or never practised, no wonder that we often find the names of men of little merit, mentioned in the public prints, as advanced to considerable stations, who were incapable of being known to the public any other way.

CXVI.—THE WOOD AND THE CLOWN.

A country fellow came one day into the wood, and looked about him with some concern; upon which the trees, with a curiosity natural to some other creatures, asked him what he wanted. He replied, that he wanted only a piece of wood to make a handle to his hatchet. Since that was all, it was voted unanimously that he should have a piece of good, sound, tough ash. But he had no sooner received and fitted it for his purpose, than he began to lay about him unmercifully, and to hack and hew without distinction, felling the noblest trees in all the forest. Then the oak is said to have spoken thus to the beech in a low whisper, "Brother, we must take it for our pains."

The Application.—No people are more justly liable to suffer than they who furnish their enemies with any kind of assistance. It is generous to forgive; it is enjoined us by religion to love our enemies; but he that trusts an enemy, much more contributes to the strengthening and arming of him, may almost depend upon repenting him for his inadvertent benevolence: and has, moreover, this to add to his distress, that when he might have prevented it, he brought his misfortunes upon himself by his own credulity.

Any person of a community, by what name or title soever distinguished, who affects a power which may possibly hurt the people, is an enemy to that people, and therefore they ought not to trust him; for though he were ever so fully determined not to abuse such a power, yet he is so far a bad man, as he disturbs the people's quiet, and makes them jealous and uneasy, by desiring to have it, or even retaining it, when it may prove mischievous. If we consult history, we shall find that the thing called *prerogative* has been claimed and contended for chiefly by those who never intended to make a good use of it, and as readily resigned and thrown up by just and wise princes, who had the true interest of their people at heart. How like senseless stocks do they act, who, by complimenting some capricious mortal, from time to time, with parcels of prerogative, at last put it out of their power to defend and maintain themselves in their just and natural liberty!

CXVII.—THE WOLF, THE FOX, AND THE APE.

The wolf indicted the fox of felony before the ape, who upon that occasion was appointed special judge of the cause. The fox gave in his answer to the wolf's accusation, and denied the fact. So after a fair hearing on both sides, the ape gave

judgment to this purpose: "I am of opinion that you," says he to the wolf, "never lost the goods you sue for: and as for you," turning to the fox, "I make no question," said he, "but you have stolen what is laid to your charge, at least." And thus the court was dismissed, with this public censure passed upon each party.

THE APPLICATION.—A man that has once blemished his credit by knavery, will not be believed for the future, even though he should speak the truth. One would think the consideration of this should be some obstruction to lying and cheating, and a discouragement to the professors of that faculty. Whoever is detected of voluntary, deliberate falsehood, although no cognisance is had of it by the public, will yet be for ever detested by the honest, discreet part of his acquaintance; and though he may escape all manner of penalty from the law of the land in which he lives, yet all that know him will lay him under a tacit, private condemnation, and treat him for ever after as an outlaw, and as an excommunicated person. Cheating and knavery may now and then succeed, and pass muster with the most silly, undiscerning part of mankind; but the contrivers of such villanous plots, whatever their advantage may be, are sure of getting little or no honour by their exploits, and are liable to be detected and exposed even by the simple crew which they practice upon. A very ape knows how to distinguish, and pass just sentence upon a fox or wolf: but the honest, just man, who is fair and upright in all his dealings, is unexceptionable to every body, and no less sure of turning every negotiation to his profit, than to his honour and credit. A knave has a chance, and perhaps but an indifferent one, of succeeding once or twice, and that with the most foolish part of mankind; whereas an honest man is sure of being constantly trusted, and well esteemed, and that by all wise and good people.

CXVIII.—JUPITER AND THE ASS.

A CERTAIN ass, which belonged to a gardener, and was weary of carrying his heavy burdens, prayed to Jupiter to give him a new master. Jupiter, consenting to his petition, gave him a tile maker, who loaded him with tiles, and made him carry heavier burdens than before. Again he came, and made supplications, beseeching the god to give him one that was more mild, or at least, to let him have any other master but this. Jupiter could not choose but laugh at his folly; however, he granted his request this time also, and made him over to a tanner. But as soon as the poor ass was sensible

what a master he had got, he could not forbear upbraiding himself with his great folly and inconstancy, which had brought him to a master not only more cruel and exacting than any of the former, but one that would not spare his very hide after he was dead

THE APPLICATION.—This Fable is a lively representation of the instability of mankind, who are seldom or never contented with their own lot. But, whatever men may think, it is a thousand to one but they know less of any other way, than of that in which they have been bred: and if Providence should comply with their humorous request in such a case, they would probably find themselves more at a loss, and more uneasy in their new station of life, than ever they were in the old; at least, there is great reason to suppose they would. The vanity and ignorance of the men of this world are so great, that if every man might be what he desired, few would be what they ought. So that it is not of less importance to the good of the public in general, than our own particular quiet and happiness, that every man should be easy and contented with the condition which Providence and his education have allotted him.

CXIX.—THE BOY AND HIS MOTHER.

A LITTLE boy, who went to school, stole one of his schoolfellow's horn-books, and brought it home to his mother, who was so far from correcting and discouraging him upon account of the theft, that she commended and gave him an apple for his pains. In process of time, as the child grew up to be a man, he accustomed himself to greater robberies, and at last, being apprehended, and committed to gaol, he was tried and condemned for felony. On the day of his execution, as the officers were conducting him to the gallows, he was attended by a vast crowd of people, and among the rest by his mother, who came sighing and sobbing along; and taking on extremely for her son's unhappy fate; which the criminal observing, called to the sheriff, and begged the favour of him that he would give him leave to speak a word or two to his poor afflicted mother. The sheriff (as who would deny a dying man so reasonable a request) gave him permission; and the felon, while, as every one thought, he was whispering something of importance to his mother, bit off her ear, to the great offence and surprise of the whole assembly. "What!" say they, "was not this villain contented with the impious acts which he has already com-

mitted, but that he must increase the number of them by doing this violence to his mother?"—"Good people," replied he, "I would not have you to be under a mistake; that wicked woman deserves this, and even worse, at my hands; for if she had chastised and chid, instead of rewarding and caressing me, when in my infancy I stole the horn-book from the school, I had not come to this ignominious, untimely end."

The Application.—Notwithstanding the great innate depravity of mankind, one need not scruple to affirm, that most of the wickedness, which is so frequent and pernicious in the world, arises from a bad education; and that the child is obliged either to the example or connivance of its parents for most of the vicious habits which it wears through the course of its future life. The mind of one that is young is like wax, soft, and capable of any impression which is given it; but it is hardened by time, and the first signature grows so firm and durable, that scarce any pains or application can erase it. It is a mistaken notion in people, when they imagine that there is no occasion for regulating or restraining the actions of very young children, which, though allowed to be sometimes very naughty in those of a more advanced age, are in them, they suppose, altogether innocent and inoffensive. But however innocent they may be as to their intention then, yet as the practice may grow upon them unobserved, and root itself into a habit, they ought to be checked and discountenanced in their first efforts towards anything that is injurious or dishonest; that the love of virtue and the abhorrence of wrong and oppression, may be let into their minds, at the same time that they receive the very first dawn of understanding, and glimmering of reason. Whatever guilt arises from the actions of one whose education has been deficient as to this point, no question but a just share of it will be laid by the great Judge of the world to the charge of those who were, or should have been, his instructors.

CXX.—THE WOLVES AND THE SICK ASS.

An ass being sick, the report of it was spread abroad in the country, and some did not stick to say, that she would die before another night went over her head. Upon this several wolves came to the stable where she lay, under pretence of making her a visit; but rapping at the door, and asking how she did, the young ass came out and told them, that his mother was much better than they desired.

The Application.—The charitable visits which are made to

many sick people proceed from much the same motive with that which prevailed upon the wolves to pay their duty to the sick ass, namely, that they may come in for some share of their remains, and feast themselves upon the reversion of their goods and chattels. We cannot, therefore, without pleasure, see these selfish visitants discovered through the mask of charity, and treated with such a reserve as neighbours of their sort justly challenge. As a behaviour thus grossly impertinent and officious must needs be offensive to a discerning man, and more especially at such a time, when he labours under any indisposition or pain of body, so it is very frequently injurious to the interest of him who makes use of it, and proves to be the means of his missing such an inheritance or legacy, as a more distant and modest deportment might have secured to him.

CXXI.—THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER.

In the winter season, a commonwealth of ants was busily employed in the management and preservation of their corn; which they exposed to the air, in heaps, round about the avenues of their little country habitation. A grasshopper, who had chanced to outlive the summer, and was ready to starve with cold and hunger, approached them with great humility, and begged that they would relieve his necessity with one grain of wheat or rye. One of the ants asked him how he had disposed of his time in summer, that he had not taken pains and laid in a stock, as they had done? "Alas! gentlemen," says he, "I passed away the time merrily and pleasantly, in drinking, singing, and dancing, and never once thought of winter."—"If that be the case," replied the ant, laughing, "all I have to say is, that they who drink, sing, and dance in the summer, must starve in the winter."

The Application.—As summer is the season of the year in which the industrious and laborious husbandman gathers and lays up such fruits as may supply his necessities in winter, so youth and manhood are the times of life which we should employ and bestow in laying in such a stock of all kinds of necessaries as may suffice for the craving demands of helpless old age. Yet notwithstanding the truth of this, there are many of those which we call rational creatures who live in a method quite opposite to it, and make it their business to squander away, in a profuse prodigality, whatever they get in their younger days: as if the infirmity of age would require no supplies to support it, or, at least, would find them administered to it in some miraculous way. From this

Fable, we learn this admirable lesson, never to lose any present opportunity of providing against the future evils and accidents of life. While health, and the flower and vigour of our age remain firm and entire, let us lay them out to the best advantage, that when the latter days take hold of us, and spoil us of our strength and abilities, we may have a store moderately sufficient to subsist upon, which we laid up in the morning of our age.

CXXII.—THE ASS, THE LION, AND THE COCK.

An ass and a cock happened to be feeding together in the same place, when on a sudden they spied a lion approaching them. This beast is reported, above all things to have an aversion, or rather antipathy, to the crowing of a cock; so that he no sooner heard the voice of that bird, but he betook him to his heels, and ran away as fast as he could. The ass, fancying he fled for fear of him, in the bravery of his heart pursued him, and followed him so far, that they were quite out of the hearing of the cock; which the lion no sooner perceived but he turned about and seized the ass; and just as he was ready to tear him in pieces, the sluggish creature is said to have expressed himself thus: "Alas! fool that I was, knowing the cowardice of my own nature, thus by an affected courage to throw myself into the jaws of death when I might have remained secure and unmolested!"

The Application.—There are many who, out of ambition to appear considerable, affect to show themselves men of fire, spirit, and courage; but these being qualities of which they are not the right owners, they generally expose themselves, and show the little title they have to them, by endeavouring to exert and produce them at unreasonable times, or with improper persons. A bully, for fear you should find him out to be a coward, overacts his part, and calls you to account for affronts which a man of true bravery would never have thought of. And a cowardly, silly fellow, observing that he may take some liberties with impunity, where perhaps the place or the company protect him, falsely concludes from thence, that the person with whom he made free is a greater coward than himself; so that he not only continues his offensive raillery and impertinence for the present, but probably renews them in some place not so privileged as the former, where his insolence meets with a due chastisement, than which nothing is more equitable in itself, or agreeable to the discreet part of mankind.

CXXIII.—THE APE AND THE FOX.

The ape, meeting the fox one day, humbly requested him to give him a piece of his fine long brush tail to cover his poor naked backside, which was so exposed to all the violence and inclemency of the weather; "for," says he, "Reynard, you have already more than you have occasion for, and a great part of it even drags along in the dirt." The fox answered, that as to his having too much, that was more than he knew; but, be it as it would, he had rather sweep the ground with his tail as long as he lived, than deprive himself of the least bit to cover the ape's nasty stinking posteriors.

The Application.—One cannot help considering the world, in the particular of the goods of fortune, as a kind of lottery, in which some few are entitled to prizes of different degrees; others, and those by much the greater part, come off with little or nothing. Some, like the fox, have even larger circumstances than they know what to do with, insomuch that they are rather a charge and incumbrance, than of any true use and pleasure to them. Others, like the poor ape's case, are all blank, not having been so lucky as to draw from the wheel of fortune wherewith to cover their nakedness, and live with tolerable decency. That these things are left, in a great measure, by Providence, to the blind uncertain shuffle of chance, is reasonable to conclude from the unequal distribution of them; for there is seldom any regard had to true merit upon these occasions; Folly and Knavery ride in coaches, while Good Sense and Honesty walk in the dirt. The all-wise Disposer of events does certainly permit these things for just and good purposes, which our shallow understanding is not able to fathom; but, humanly thinking, if the riches and power of the world were to be always in the hands of the virtuous part of mankind, they would be more likely to do good with them in their generation, than the vile sottish wretches who generally enjoy them. A truly good man would direct all the superfluous part of his wealth, at least, for the necessities of his fellow-creatures, though there were no religion which enjoined it; but selfish and avaricious people, who are always great knaves, how much soever they may have, will never think they have enough; much less be induced by any consideration of virtue or religion to part with the least farthing for public charity and beneficence.

CXXIV.—THE ASS AND THE LITTLE DOG.

THE ass observing how great a favourite the little dog was with his master, how much caressed, and fondled, and fed with good bits at every meal, and for no other reason, as he could perceive, but skipping and frisking about, wagging his tail, and leaping up into his master's lap, he was resolved to imitate the same, and see whether such a behaviour would not procure him the same favours. Accordingly, the master was no sooner come home from walking about his fields and gardens, and was seated in his easy chair, but the ass, who observed him, came gamboling and braying towards him, in a very awkward manner. The master could not help laughing aloud at the odd sight. But his jest was soon turned into earnest, when he felt the rough salute of the ass's forefeet, who, raising himself upon his hinder legs, pawed against his breast with a most loving air, and would fain have jumped into his lap. The good man, terrified at this outrageous behaviour, and unable to endure the weight of so heavy a beast, cried out; upon which, one of his servants running in with a good stick, and laying on heartily upon the bones of the poor ass, soon convinced him, that every one who desires it is not qualified to be a favourite.

THE APPLICATION.—Some men are as engaged in their way as little dogs. They can fawn, wheedle, cringe, or, if occasion requires, leap backward and forward over a stick, to the great emolument of their master, and entertainment of those that behold them. But these are qualifications to which everybody cannot pretend; and therefore none but those who have a genius for it should aspire at the employment. Many a man envies the happiness of those favourites, and would fain insinuate himself into the same good graces, if he did but know the way; but whoever has a tolerable share of discretion will distrust his abilities in this respect, and modestly forbear the attempt, for fear he should miscarry, and look like an ass. But, in short, the true moral of this Fable is, that every one should consider the just turn and temper of his parts, and weigh the talents by which he hopes to be distinguished. After such an examination, he may the more certainly know how to apply them to the most proper purposes; at least, so as not to hurt, or even mortify himself by any mistaken address. Since there is such a variety of tempers in the world, and a no less multiplicity of arts and studies to fit and tally with them, how reasonable is it in general, how much would it be for the true

interest of every one in particular, if men would but be directed by the natural bent of their genius to such pursuits as are most agreeable to their capacities, and to the rudiments of education which they have most strongly imbibed.

CXXV.—THE BIRDS, THE BEASTS, AND THE BAT.

Once upon a time, there commenced a fierce war between the birds and the beasts, when the bat, taking advantage of his ambiguous make, hoped by that means to live secure in a state of neutrality, and save his bacon. It was not long before the forces on each side met, and gave battle; and their animosities running very high, a bloody slaughter ensued. The bat, at the beginning of the day, thinking the birds most likely to carry it, listed himself among them, but kept fluttering at a little distance, that he might the better observe and take his measures accordingly. However, after some time spent in the action, the army of the beasts seeming to prevail, he went entirely over to them and endeavoured to convince them by the affinity which he had to a mouse, that he was by nature a beast, and would always continue firm and true to their interest. His plea was admitted; but, in the end, the advantage turning completely on the side of the birds, under the admirable conduct and courage of their general, the eagle, the bat, to save his life, and escape the lisgrace of falling into the hands of his deserted friends, betook himself to flight; and ever since, skulking in caves and hollow trees all day, as if ashamed to show himself, he never appears till the dusk in the evening, when all the feathered inhabitants of the air are gone to roost.

The Application.—For any one to desert the interest of his country, and turn renegade, either out of fear, or any prospect of advantage, is so notoriously vile and low, that it is no wonder if the man who is detected in it is for ever ashamed to see the sun, and to show himself in the eyes of those whose cause he has betrayed. Yet as there is scarce any vice, even to be imagined, but there may be found men who have been guilty of it, perhaps there have been as many criminals in the case before us as in any one particular besides, notwithstanding the aggravation and extraordinary degree of its baseness. We cannot help reflecting upon it without horror; but as truly detestable as this vice is, and must be acknowledged to be by all mankind, so far are those that practise it from being treated with a just resentment by the rest of mankind, that, by the kind reception they afterwards meet with, they rather

seem to be encouraged and applauded, than despised and discountenanced for it.

CXXVI.—THE BEAR AND THE BEE-HIVES.

A BEAR, climbing over the fence into a place where bees were kept, began to plunder the hives, and rob them of their honey. But the bees, to revenge the injury, attacked him in a whole swarm together; and though they were not able to pierce his rugged hide, yet with their little stings they so annoyed his eyes and nostrils, that, unable to endure the smarting pain, with impatience he tore the skin over his ears with his own claws, and suffered ample punishment for the injury he did the bees, in breaking open their waxen cells.

THE APPLICATION.—Many and great are the injuries of which some men are guilty towards others, for the sake of gratifying some liquorish appetite. For there are those who would not stick to bring desolation upon their country, and run the hazard of their own necks into the bargain, rather than baulk a wicked inclination, either of cruelty, ambition, or avarice. But it were to be wished all, who are hurried by such blind impulses, would consider a moment before they proceed to irrecoverable execution. Injuries and wrongs not only call for revenge and reparation with the voice of equity itself, but oftentimes carry their punishment along with them, and, by an unforeseen train of events, are retorted at the head of the actor of them; and not seldom, from a deep remorse, expiated upon himself by his own hand.

CXXVII.—THE COCK AND THE FOX.

A COCK, being perched among the branches of a lofty tree, crowed aloud, so that the shrillness of his voice echoed through the wood, and invited a fox to the place, who was prowling in that neighbourhood in quest of his prey; but Reynard, finding the cock was inaccessible, by reason of the height of his situation, had recourse to stratagem, in order to decoy him down; so, approaching the tree, "Cousin," says he, "I am heartily glad to see you; but at the same time I cannot forbear expressing my uneasiness at the inconvenience of the place, which will not let me pay my respects to you in a handsome manner: though I suppose you will come down presently, and so that difficulty is easily removed."—"Indeed, cousin," says the cock, "to tell you the truth, I do not think it safe to venture upon the ground;

for though I am convinced how much you are my friend, yet I may have the misfortune to fall into the clutches of some other beasts, and what will become of me then?"—"O dear," says Reynard, "is it possible that you can be so ignorant as not to know of the peace that has been lately proclaimed between all kinds of birds and beasts, and that we are for the future to forbear hostilities on all sides, and to live in the utmost love and harmony, and that under penalty of suffering the severest punishment that can be inflicted?" All this while the cock seemed to give little attention to what he said, but stretched out his neck, as if he saw something at a distance. "Cousin," says the fox, "what is that you look at so earnestly?"—"Why," says the cock, "I think I see a pack of hounds yonder, a little way off."—"O then," says the fox, "your humble servant, I must be gone."—"Nay, pray cousin, do not go," says the cock, "I am just coming down; sure you are not afraid of dogs in these peaceable times!"—"No, no," says he, "but ten to one whether they have heard of the proclamation yet."

THE APPLICATION.—It is a very agreeable thing to see craft repelled by cunning; more especially to behold the snares of the wicked broken and defeated by the discreet management of the innocent. The moral of this Fable principally puts us in mind not to be too credulous towards the insinuations of those who are already distinguished by their want of faith and honesty. When therefore any such would draw us into a compliance with their destructive measures, by a pretended civility and extraordinary concern for our interest, we should consider such proposals in their true light, as a bait artfully placed to conceal the fatal hook which is intended to draw us into captivity and thraldom. An honest man, with a little plain sense, may do a thousand advantageous things for the public good, and, without being master of much address or rhetoric, as easily convince people that his designs are intended for their welfare; but a wicked, designing politician, though he has a tongue as eloquent as ever spoke, may sometimes be disappointed in his projects, and foiled in his schemes; especially when their destructive texture is so coarsely spun, and the threads of mischief are so large in them, as to be felt even by those whose senses are scarce perfect enough to see and understand them.

CXXVIII.—THE CAT AND THE COCK.

THE cat having a mind to make a meal of the cock, seized him one morning by surprise, and asked him what he had to

say for himself, why slaughter should not pass upon him? The cock replied, that he was serviceable to mankind, by crowing in the morning, and calling them up to their daily labour. "That is true," says the cat, "and is the very objection that I have against you; for you make such a shrill impertinent noise, that people cannot sleep for you. Besides, you are an incestuous rascal, and make no scruple of lying with your mother and sisters."—"Well," says the cock, "this I do not deny; but I do it to procure eggs and chickens for my master."—"Ah, villain," says the cat, "hold your wicked tongue; such impieties as these declare that you are no longer fit to live."

THE APPLICATION.—When a wicked man, in power, has a mind to glut his appetite in any respect, innocence, or even merit, is no protection against him. The cries of Justice, and the voice of Reason, are of no effect upon a conscience hardened in iniquity, and a mind versed in a long practice of wrong and robbery. Remonstrances, however reasonably urged, or movingly couched, have no more influence upon the heart of such a one, than the gentle evening breeze has upon the oak, when it whispers among its branches, or the rising surges upon the deaf rock, when they dash and break against its sides. Power should never be trusted in the hands of an impious, selfish man, and one that has more regard to the gratification of his own unbounded avarice, than to public peace and justice. Were it not for the tacit consent and heartless compliance of a great majority of fools, mankind would not be ridden, as oftentimes they are, by a little majority of knaves, to their great misfortune; for, whatever people may think of the times, if they were ten times worse than they are, it is principally owing to their own stupidity. Why do they trust the man a moment longer, who has once injured and betrayed them?

CXXIX.—THE WOLVES AND THE SHEEP.

THE wolves and the sheep had been a long time in a state of war together; at last a cessation of arms was proposed in order to a treaty of peace, and hostages were to be delivered on both sides for security. The wolves proposed that the sheep should give up their dogs on the one side, and that they should deliver up their young ones on the other. This proposal was agreed to; but no sooner executed, than the young wolves began to howl for want of their dams: the old ones took this opportunity to cry out, "The treaty was broke;" and so falling upon the sheep, who were destitute

P. 136.

of their faithful guardians, the dogs, they worried and devoured them without control.

The Application.—In all our transactions with mankind, even in the most private and low life, we should have special regard how and with whom we trust ourselves. Men, in this respect, ought to look upon each other as wolves, and to keep themselves under a secure guard, and in a continual posture of defence; particularly upon any treaties of importance, the securities on both sides ought to be strictly considered; and each should act with so cautious a view to their own interest, as never to pledge or part with that which is the very essence and basis of their safety and well-being. And if this be a just and reasonable rule for men to govern themselves by in their own private affairs, how much more fitting and necessary is it in any conjuncture wherein the public is concerned? If the enemy should demand our whole army for a hostage, the danger in our complying with it would be so gross and apparent, that we could not help observing it; but perhaps a country may equally expose itself by parting with a particular town or general, as its whole army; its safety, not seldom, depending as much upon one of the former as upon the latter. In short, hostages and securities may be something very dear to us, but ought never to be given up, if our welfare and preservation have any dependence upon them.

CXXX.—THE DOG AND THE SHEEP.

The dog sued the sheep for a debt, of which the kite and the wolf were to be judges. They, without debating long upon the matter, or making any scruple for want of evidence, gave sentence for the plaintiff; who immediately tore the poor sheep in pieces, and divided the spoil with the unjust judges.

The Application.—Deplorable are the times when open, barefaced villany is protected and encouraged, when innocence is obnoxious, honesty contemptible, and it is reckoned criminal to espouse the cause of virtue. Men originally entered into covenants and civil compacts with each other, for the promotion of their happiness and well-being, for the establishment of justice and public peace. How comes it then that they look stupidly on, and tamely acquiesce, when wicked men pervert this end, and establish an arbitrary tyranny of their own, upon the foundation of fraud and oppression? Among beasts, who are incapable of being civilised by social laws, it is no strange thing to see innocent, helpless sheep, fall a prey to dogs, wolves, and kites; but it is

amazing how mankind could ever sink down to so low a degree of base cowardice, as to suffer some of the worst of their species to usurp a power over them, to supersede the righteous laws of good government, and to exercise all kinds of injustice and hardship, in gratifying their own vicious lusts. Wherever such enormities are practised, it is when a few rapacious statesmen combine together to get and secure the power in their own hands and agree to divide the spoil among themselves. For as long as the cause is to be tried only among themselves, no question but they will always vouch for each other. But, at the same time, it is hard to determine which resemble brutes most, they in acting, or the people in suffering them to act their vile selfish schemes.

CXXXI.—THE HAWK AND THE FARMER.

A HAWK, pursuing a pigeon over a corn-field with great eagerness and force, threw himself into a net, which a husbandman had planted there to take the crows; who, being employed not far off, and seeing the hawk fluttering in the net, came and took him. But just as he was going to kill him, the hawk besought him to let him go, assuring him that he was only following a pigeon, and neither intended, nor had done any harm to him. To whom the farmer replied, "And what harm had the poor pigeon done to you?" Upon which he wrung his head off immediately.

THE APPLICATION.—Passion, prejudice, or power, may so far blind a man, as not to suffer him justly to distinguish whether he is not acting injuriously, at the same time that he fancies he is only doing his duty. Now the best way of being convinced whether what we do is reasonable and fit, is to put ourselves in the place of the persons with whom we are concerned, and then consult our conscience about the rectitude of our behaviour. For this we may be assured of, that we are acting wrong, whenever we are doing anything to another, which we should think unjust if it was done to us. Nothing but an habitual inadvertency, as to this particular, can be the occasion that so many ingenuous, noble spirits are often engaged in courses so opposite to virtue and honour. He that would startle, if a little attorney should tamper with him to forswear himself to bring off some old offender, some ordinary trespasser, will, without scruple, infringe the constitution of his country, for the precarious prospect of a place or a pension. Which is most corrupt—he that lies like a knight of the post for a half-a-crown and a dinner, or he that does it for the more substantial consideration of a thousand pounds a year?

Which would be doing most service to the public, giving true testimony in a cause between two private men, and against one little common thief, who has stolen a gold watch, or voting honestly and courageously against a rogue of state, who has gagged and bound the laws, and stript the nation? Let those who intend to act justly but view things in this light, and all would be well. There would be no danger of their oppressing others, or fear of being oppressed themselves.

CXXXII.—DEATH AND CUPID.

Cupid, one sultry summer's noon, tired with play, and faint with heat, went into a cool grotto to repose himself, which happened to be the cave of Death. He threw himself carelessly down on the floor, and his quiver turning topsy-turvy, all the arrows fell out, and mingled with those of Death, which lay scattered up and down the place. When he awoke he gathered them up as well as he could; but they were so intermingled, that though he knew the certain number, he could not rightly distinguish them; from which it happened that he took up some of the arrows which belonged to Death, and left several of his own in the room of them. This is the cause that we now and then see the hearts of the old and decrepit transfixed with the bolts of Love; and, with equal grief and surprise, behold the youthful, blooming part of our species smitten with the darts of Death.

The Application.—If we allow for this Fable's being written by an heathen, and according to the scheme of the ancient pagan theology, it will appear to be a pretty probable solution of some parts of the dispensation of Providence, which otherwise seem to be obscure and unaccountable. For, when we see the young and the old fall promiscuously by the hand of Death, and at the same time consider that the world is governed by an all-wise Providence, we are puzzled how to account for so seemingly preposterous and unnatural a way of working. We should look upon a gardener to be mad, or at least very capricious, who, when his young trees are just arrived to a degree of bearing, should cut them down for fuel, and choose out old, rotten, decayed, sapless stocks, to graft and inoculate upon; yet the regular proceedings of those two levellers, Love and Death, appear to be every jot as odd and unreasonable. However, we must take it for granted that all these things, though the method of them is hidden from our eyes, are transacted after the most just and fit manner imaginable; but, humanly speaking, it is

strange that Death should be permitted to make such undistinguished havoc in the world, and at the same time just as shocking and unnatural to see old age laid betwixt a pair of wedding sheets, as it is for youth and beauty to be locked up in the cold embraces of the grave.

CXXXIII.—THE DOVE AND THE ANT.

The ant, compelled by thirst, went to drink in a clear, purling rivulet, but the current, with its circling eddy, snatched her away, and carried her down the stream. A dove, pitying her distressed condition, cropt a branch from a neighbouring tree, and let it fall into the water, by means of which the ant saved herself and got ashore. Not long after, a fowler having a design upon the dove, planted his nets in due order, without the bird's observing what he was about, which the ant perceiving, just as he was going to put his design in execution, she bit him by the heel, and made him give so sudden a start, that the dove took the alarm, and flew away.

The Application.—One good turn deserves another; and gratitude is excited by so noble and natural a spirit, that he ought to be looked upon as the vilest of creatures who has no sense of it. It is, indeed, so very just and equitable a thing, and so much every man's duty, that to speak of it properly, one should not mention it as anything meritorious, or that may claim praise and admiration, any more than we should say a man ought to be rewarded or commended for not killing his father, or forbearing to set fire to his neighbour's house. The bright and shining piece of morality, therefore, which is recommended to us in this Fable, is set forth in this example of the dove, who, without any obligation or expectation, does a voluntary office of charity to his fellow-creature in distress. The constant, uninterrupted practice of this virtue, is the only thing in which we are capable of imitating the Great Author of our being, whose beloved Son, besides the many precepts he has given to enforce this duty, used this expression as a common saying: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

CXXXIV.—THE EAGLE AND THE CROW.

An eagle flew down from the top of a high rock, and settled upon the back of a lamb; and then instantly flying up into the air again, bore his bleating prize aloft in his pounces. A crow, who sat upon an elm, and beheld this exploit, resolved to imitate it: so flying down upon the back of a ram, and entangling his claws in the wool, he fell a chattering

and attempting to fly, by which means he drew the observation of the shepherd upon him, who finding his feet hampered in the fleece of the ram, easily took him, and gave him to his boys for their sport and diversion.

THE APPLICATION.—Every quality which is excellent and commendable is not, however, always a proper object for our imitation. We ought to state our own account honestly and fairly, that we may see what our abilities are, and how our circumstances stand, otherwise we may not only become ridiculous to others, but prejudicial to ourselves, by some awkward and ill-judged emulation, though it happen to be in a qualification truly laudable and great. It behoves every man to exert a good share of industry towards the advancement of his interest, or, if he pleases, of his reputation. But then it is highly necessary that he does this with a true regard to his own capacity, and without any danger of exposing or embarrassing himself in the operation.

CXXXV.—THE ENVIOUS MAN AND THE COVETOUS.

AN envious man happened to be offering up his prayers to Jupiter just in the same time and place with a covetous miserable fellow. Jupiter, not caring to be troubled with their impertinencies himself, sent Apollo to examine the merits of their petitions, and to give them such relief as he should think proper. Apollo therefore opened his commission, and withal told them, that to make short of the matter, whatever the one asked the other should have it double. Upon this the covetous man, though he had a thousand things to request, yet forbore to ask first, hoping to receive a double quantity, for he concluded that all men's wishes sympathised with his. By this means the envious man had an opportunity of preferring his petition first, which was the thing he aimed at: so, without much hesitation, he prayed to be relieved, by having one of his eyes put out, knowing that, of consequence, his companion would be deprived of both.

THE APPLICATION.—In this Fable, the folly of those two vices, Envy and Avarice, is fully exposed, and handsomely rallied. The miser, though he has the riches of the world, without stint, laid open to his choice, yet dares not name the sum, for fear another should be richer than himself. The advantage of a double quantity by receiving last, is what he cannot bear to lose, and fares accordingly. The envious man, though he has the power of calling for good things, without measure, to himself or others, yet he waves

this happy privilege, and is content to punish himself by a very great loss, even that of an eye, that he may bring down a double portion of the like calamity upon another. These are the true tempers of the covetous and the envious; one can scarce determine whether they are more mischievous to themselves, or to the public; but it is manifest, that they are highly noxious to both, and should be treated accordingly.

CXXXVI.—THE FOX AND THE LION.

THE first time the fox saw the lion, he fell down at his feet, and was ready to die with fear. The second time he took courage, and could even bear to look upon him. The third time he had the impudence to come up to him, to salute him, and to enter into familiar conversation with him.

THE APPLICATION.—From this Fable we may observe the two extremes in which we may fall as to a proper behaviour towards our superiors. The one is a bashfulness, proceeding either from a vicious guilty mind, or a timorous rusticity; the other an overbearing impudence, which assumes more than becomes it, and so renders the person insufferable to the conversation of well-bred reasonable people. But there is this difference between the bashfulness that arises from the want of education, and the shamefacedness that accompanies conscious guilt; the first by a continuance of time and a nearer acquaintance, may be ripened into a proper liberal behaviour; the other no sooner finds an easy, practicable access, but it throws off all manner of reverence, grows every day more and more familiar, and branches out into the utmost indecency and irregularity. Indeed, there are many occasions which may happen to cast an awe, or even a terror upon our minds at first view, without any just and reasonable grounds; but upon a little recollection, or a nearer insight, we recover ourselves, and can appear indifferent and unconcerned, where before we were ready to sink under a load of diffidence and fear. We should, upon such occasions, use our endeavours to regain a due degree of steadiness and resolution; but, at the same time, we must have a care that our efforts in that respect do not force the balance too much, and make it rise to an unbecoming freedom, and an offensive familiarity.

CXXXVII.—THE GEESE AND THE CRANES.

A FLOCK of geese, and a parcel of cranes, used often to feed together in a corn-field. At last, the owner of the corn, with his servants, coming upon them of a sudden, surprised

them in the very fact; and the geese, being heavy, fat, full-bodied creatures, were most of them sufferers; but the cranes, being thin and light, easily flew away.

The Application.—When the enemy comes to make a seizure, they are sure to suffer most whose circumstances are the richest and fattest. In any case of persecution, money hangs like a dead weight about a man; and we never feel gold so heavy, as when we endeavour to make off with it. Therefore wise and politic ministers of state, whenever they see a storm begin to gather over their heads, always take care to unlade themselves of a good part of their cargo; and, by this means, seldom find but the blasts of obloquy, through which they are to make their way, are less deaf and inexorable than the stormy waves of the ocean. Indeed, poverty is too frequently the occasion of men's being treated as if they were guilty of the greatest crimes and reproaches; but then these sort of criminals have this advantage, that no one thinks fit to treat them with anything worse than contempt; whereas, if any pretence can be found to fall upon the man who is rich, it is a miracle if he escapes with both life and money. In short, riches are like the baggage of an army, very useful while we lie in quiet possession of the camp, or are powerful enough to defy the enemy; but when once we are put to the rout, if we would get off with our lives and liberties, we must quit our baggage as soon as possible, and leave it for plunder to our pursuers. Nay, however strongly intrenched we may think ourselves, as long as money is in the case, it is good to look about us for fear of a surprise; for, after all, he that does not, upon occasion, make himself wings, with his riches to fly off with, deserves to be punished, like a goose as he is, for his heaviness.

CXXXVIII.—THE HORSE AND THE ASS.

The horse, adorned with his great war-saddle, and champing his foaming bridle, came thundering along the way, and made the mountains echo with his loud shrill neighing. He had not gone far before he overtook an ass, who was labouring under a heavy burden, and moving slowly on in the same track with himself. Immediately he called out to him in an haughty, imperious tone, and threatened to trample him in the dirt, if he did not break the way for him. The poor patient ass, not daring to dispute the matter, quietly got out of his way as fast as he could, and let him go by. Not long after this, the same horse, in an engagement with the enemy, happened to be shot in the eye, which made him un-

fit for show or any military business; so he was stript of his fine ornaments and sold to a carrier. The ass meeting him in this forlorn condition, thought that now it was his time to insult; and so, says he, "Hey-day, friend, is it you! well, I always believed that pride of yours would one day have a fall."

THE APPLICATION.—Pride is a very unaccountable vice. Many people fall into it unawares, and are often led into it by motives which, if they considered things rightly, would make them abhor the very thoughts of it. There is no man that thinks well of himself, but desires the rest of the world should think so too. Now it is the wrong measures we take in endeavouring after this, that expose us to discerning people in that light which they call pride, and which is so far from giving us any advantage in their esteem, that it renders us despicable and ridiculous. It is an affectation of appearing considerable that puts men upon being proud and insolent; and their very being so makes them infallibly little and inconsiderable. The man that claims and calls for reverence and respect, deserves none; he that acts for applause is sure to lose it: the certain way to get it is to seem to shun it, and the humble man, according to the maxims even of this world, is the most likely to be exalted. He, that in his words or actions, pleads for superiority, and rather chooses to do an ill action, than condescend to do a good one, acts like a horse, and is as void of reason and understanding. The rich and the powerful want nothing but the love and esteem of mankind to complete their felicity; and these they are sure to obtain by a good-humoured, kind condescension; and as certain of being everybody's aversion, whilst the least tincture of overbearing rudeness is perceptible in their words or actions. What brutal tempers must they be of, who can be easy and indifferent, while they know themselves to be universally hated, though in the midst of affluence and power! But this is not all! for if ever the wheel of Fortune should whirl them from the top to the bottom, instead of friendship or commiseration, they will meet with nothing but contempt; and that with much more justice than ever they themselves exerted it towards others.

CXXXIX.—THE HUSBANDMAN AND HIS SONS.

A CERTAIN husbandman lying at the point of death, and being desirous his sons should pursue that innocent entertaining course of agriculture, in which himself had been engaged all his life, made use of this expedient to induce them to it. He called them to his bedside, and spoke to

this effect:—"All the patrimony I have to bequeath to you, sons, is my farm and vineyard, of which I make you joint heirs. But I charge you not to let it go out of your own occupation; for if I have any treasure besides, it lies buried somewhere in the ground, within a foot of the surface." This made the sons conclude that he talked of money which he had hid there. So, after their father's death, with unwearied diligence and application, they carefully dug up every inch, both of the farm and vineyard. From which it came to pass, that though they missed the treasure they expected, the ground, by being so well stirred and loosened, produced so plentiful a crop of all that was sowed in it, as proved a real, and that no inconsiderable treasure.

THE APPLICATION.—Labour and industry, well applied, seldom fail of finding a treasure; and since something towards conveniences and pleasures of life may be thus procured, why should we lose and throw it away, by being slothful and idle? Exercise is a great support of health, and health is by far the greatest single blessing of life, which alone will weigh sufficient with any considerate man, so as to keep him from being utterly destitute of employment. But of all the kinds of treasures which are sure to reward the diligence of the active man, none is more agreeable, either in the pursuit or possession, than that which arises from the culture of the earth. What can be more satisfactory, than to have our hopes grow and increase every day with the product of the ground; to have our minds entertained with the wonderful economy of the vegetable world; our nerves strengthened, and our blood purified, by a constant return of exercise; and a new relish given to every meal from the fragrancy of the air, and the freshness of the soil? Add to all these, that the treasures and delights of agriculture are so various, that they are not easily to be described, and are never to be excelled. They are scarce to be conceived by one that has not felt them, nor to be truly painted by any but the greatest of poets.

CXL.—THE OLD LION.

A LION, worn out with age, lay fetching his last gasp, and agonising in the convulsive struggles of death: upon which occasion, several of the beasts who had formerly been sufferers by him, came and revenged themselves upon him. The boar, with his mighty tusks, drove at him in a stroke that glanced like lightning; and the bull gored him with his violent horns; which, when the ass saw they might do with-

out any danger, he too came up, and threw his heels into the lion's face: upon which the poor old expiring tyrant uttered these words with his last dying groan: "Alas! how grievous it is to suffer insults, even from the brave and the valiant! but to be spurned by so base a creature as this is, who is the disgrace of nature, is worse than dying ten thousand deaths."

THE APPLICATION.—He that would be reverenced and respected by the rest of mankind, must lay in a foundation for it, of some kind or other; but people cannot be persuaded to pay deference and esteem for nothing. So that though we have lived in good repute in the world, if ever we should happen to outlive our stock, we must not be surprised to find ourselves slighted and affronted even by the vilest scum of the people. If, therefore, we would raise to ourselves a dignity that will continue not only to the end of our lives, but extend itself far down among the ages of posterity, we should take care to establish it upon a foundation of virtue and good-nature. This will not only preserve us from the insults of our enemies, but, upon occasion, surround us with a trusty guard of faithful and sincere friends.

CXLI.—THE LION, THE TIGER, AND THE FOX.

A LION and a tiger fell together by the ears over the carcase of a fawn, which they found in the forest, their title to him being to be decided by force of arms. The battle was severe and tough on both sides, and they held it out, tearing and worrying one another so long, that, what with wounds and fatigue, they were so faint and weary, they were not able to strike another stroke. Thus, while they lay upon the ground, panting and lolling out their tongues, a fox chanced to pass that way, who perceiving how the case stood, very impudently stept in between them, seized the booty which they had all this while been contending for, and carried it off. The two combatants, who lay and beheld all this, without having strength enough to stir and prevent it, were only wise enough to make this reflection:—Behold the fruits of our strife and contention! that villain the fox bears away the prize, and we ourselves have deprived each other of the power to recover it from him.

THE APPLICATION.—When people go to law about an uncertain title, and have spent their whole estate in the contest, nothing is more common than for some little pettifogging attorney to step in and secure it for himself. The very name of law seems to

imply equity and justice, and that is the bait which has drawn in many to their ruin. Others are excited by their passions, and care not if they destroy themselves, so they do but see their enemy perish with them. But if we lay aside prejudice and folly, and think calmly of the matter, we shall find, that going to law is not the best way of deciding differences about property; it being, generally speaking, much safer to trust to the arbitration of two or three honest, sensible neighbours, than, at a vast expense of money, time, and trouble, to run through the tedious frivolous forms, with which, by the artifices of greedy lawyers, a court of judicature is contrived to be attended. It has been said, that if mankind would but lead moral, virtuous lives, there would be no occasion for divines; if they would but live temperately and soberly, that they would never want physicians; both which assertions, though true in the main, are yet expressed in too great a latitude. But one may venture to affirm, that if men preserved a strict regard to justice and honesty in their dealings with each other, and, upon any mistake or apprehension, were always ready to refer the matter to disinterested umpires of acknowledged judgment and integrity, they never could have the least occasion for lawyers. When people have gone to law, it is rarely to be found but one or both parties were either stupidly obstinate, or rashly inconsiderate. For, if the case should happen to be so intricate, that a man of common sense could not distinguish who had the best title, how easy would it be to have the opinion of the best counsel in the land, and agree to determine it by that. If it should appear dubious even after that, how much better it would be to divide the thing in dispute, rather than go to law, and hazard the losing, not only of the whole, but costs and damages into the bargain.

CXLII.—THE FOX AND THE SICK LION.

It was reported that the lion was sick, and the beasts were made to believe that they could not make their court better than by going to visit him. Upon this they generally went, but it was particularly taken notice of that the fox was not one of the number. The lion therefore despatched one of his jackals to sound him about it, and ask him why he had so little charity and respect as never to come near him at a time when he lay so dangerously ill, and everybody else had been to see him. "Why," replies the fox, "pray present my duty to his majesty, and tell him that I have the same respect for him as ever, and have been coming several times to kiss his royal hand; but I am so terribly frightened at the

mouth of his cave, to see the print of my fellow-subjects' feet all pointing forwards and none backwards, that I have not resolution enough to venture in." Now the truth of the matter was, that this sickness of the lion's was only a sham to draw the beasts into his den, the more easily to devour them.

THE APPLICATION.—A man should weigh and consider the nature of any proposal well before he gives into it, for a rash and hasty compliance has been the ruin of many a one. And it is the quintessence of prudence not to be too easy of belief. Indeed, the multitude think altogether in the same track, and are much upon a footing. Their meditations are confined in one channel, and they follow one another very orderly in a regular stupidity. Can a man of thought and spirit be harnessed thus, and trudge along like a pack-horse in a deep, stinking, muddy road, when he may frisk it over the beauteous lawns, or lose himself agreeably in the shady verdant mazes of unrestrained contemplation? It is impossible. Vulgar notions are so generally attended with error, that wherever one traces the footsteps of the many tending all one way, it is enough to make one suspect, with the fox in the Fable, that there is some trick in it. The eye of reason is dulled and stupified when it is confined and made to gaze continually upon the same thing; it rather chooses to look about it, and amuse itself with a variety of objects, as they lie scattered up and down in the unbounded prospect. He that goes implicitly into a thing may be mistaken, notwithstanding the number of those who keep him company; but he that keeps out till he sees reason to enter, acts upon the true maxims of policy and prudence. In short, it becomes us, as we are reasonable creatures, to behave ourselves as such, and to do as few things as possible of which we may have occasion to repent.

CXLIII.—THE MICE IN COUNCIL.

THE mice called a general council: and having met, after the doors were locked, entered into a free consultation about ways and means, how to render their fortunes and estates more secure from the danger of the cat. Many things were offered, and much was debated, *pro* and *con*, upon the matter. At last a young mouse, in a fine florid speech, concluded upon an expedient, and that the only one, which was to put them for the future entirely out of the power of the enemy; and this was, that the cat should wear a bell about her neck, which, upon the least motion, would give the alarm, and be a signal for them to retire into their holes.

This speech was received with great applause, and it was even proposed by some, that the mouse who made it should have the thanks of the assembly. Upon which an old gray mouse, who had sat silent all the while, stood up, and in another speech owned that the contrivance was admirable, and the author of it, without doubt, an ingenious mouse; but he said, he thought it would not be so proper to vote him thanks till he should further inform them how this bell was to be fastened about the cat's neck, and what mouse would undertake to do it.

THE APPLICATION.—Many things appear feasible in speculation, which are afterwards found to be impracticable. And since the execution of anything is that which is to complete and finish its very existence, what raw counsellors are those who advise! what precipitate politicians those who proceed to the management of things in their nature incapable of answering their own expectations, or their promises to others! At the same time, the Fable teaches us not to expose ourselves in any of our little political coffee-house committees, by determining what should be done upon every occurrence of mal-administration, when we have neither commission nor power to execute it. He that, upon such occasions, adjudges, as a preservative for the state, that this or that should be applied to the neck of those who have been enemies to it, will appear full as ridiculous as the mouse in the Fable, when the question is asked, "Who shall put it there?" In reality, we do but expose ourselves to the hatred of some, and the contempt of others, when we inadvertently utter our impracticable speculations, in respect of the public, either in private company, or authorised assemblies.

CXLIV.—THE LION, THE ASS, AND THE FOX.

THE lion, the ass, and the fox, went a hunting together in the forest, and it was agreed, that whatever was taken should be divided amongst them. They happened to have very good sport, and caught a large fat stag, which the lion ordered the ass to divide. The ass, according to the best of his capacity, did so, and made three pretty equal shares. But such levelling doings not suiting at all with the craving temper of the greedy lion, without further delay he flew upon the poor ass, and tore him in pieces, and then bid the fox divide it into two parts. Reynard, who seldom wanted a prompter, however, had his cue given him sufficiently upon this occasion; and so, nibbling off one little bit for

himself, he laid forth all the rest for the lion's portion. The royal brute was so delighted at this dutiful and handsome proof of his respect, that he could not forbear expressing the satisfaction it gave him: and asked him withal, where he could possibly have learnt so proper and so courtly a behaviour: "Why," replies Reynard, "to tell your majesty the truth, I was taught it by the ass that lies dead there."

The Application.—We may learn a great deal of useful experience from the examples of other people, if we will but take the pains to observe them. And, besides the profit of the instruction, there is no small pleasure in being taught any proper science at the expense of somebody else. To this purpose, the history of former times, as well as the transactions of the present, are very well adapted; and so copious, as to be able to furnish us with precedents upon almost every occasion; the rock upon which another has split is a kind of light-house, or beacon, to warn us from the like calamity; and by taking such an advantage, how easily may we steer a safe course! He that, in any negotiation with his betters, does not well and wisely consider how to behave himself, so as not to give offence, may very likely come off as the ass did: but a cool, thinking man, though he should despair of ever making friends of people in power, will be cautious and prudent enough to do nothing which may provoke them to be his enemies.

CXLV.—THE HORSE AND THE LION.

A lion, seeing a fine plump nag, had a great mind to eat a bit of him, but knew not which way to get him into his power. At last he bethought himself of this contrivance; he gave out that he was a physician, who having gained experience by his travels into foreign countries, had made himself capable of curing any sort of malady or distemper incident to any kind of beast, hoping by this stratagem to get an easier admittance among cattle, and find an opportunity to execute his design. The horse, who smoked the matter, was resolved to be even with him; and so humouring the thing, as if he suspected nothing, he prayed the lion to give him his advice in relation to a thorn which he had got in his foot, which had quite lamed him, and gave him great pain and uneasiness. The lion readily agreed, and desired he might see the foot; upon which the horse lifted up one of his hind legs, and while the lion pretended to be poring earnestly upon his hoof, gave him such a kick in the face as

P. 152.

quite stunned him, and left him sprawling upon the ground. In the mean time, the horse trotted away, neighing and laughing merrily at the success of the trick, by which he had defeated the purpose of one who intended to have tricked him out of his life.

The Application.—Though all manner of fraud and tricking is mean, and utterly beneath a man of sense and honour, yet, methinks, equity itself allows us to disappoint the deceiver, and to repel craft by cunning. Treachery has something so wicked and worthy of punishment in its nature, that it deserves to meet with a return of its own kind; an open revenge would be too liberal for it, and nothing matches it but itself. However therefore abominable it is to be the aggressor in this point, yet it cannot be inconsistent with virtue to counterplot, and to take all manner of advantage against the man who is undermining us.

CXLVI.—THE OLD MAN AND HIS SONS.

An old man had many sons, who were often falling out with one another. When the father had exerted his authority: and used other means in order to reconcile them, and all to no purpose, at last he had recourse to this expedient, he ordered his sons to be called before him, and a short bundle of sticks to be brought, and then commanded them, one by one, to try if, with all their might and strength, they could any of them break it. They all tried, but to no purpose; for the sticks being closely and compactly bound up together, it was impossible for the force of man to do it. After this, the father ordered the bundle to be untied, and gave a single stick to each of his sons, at the same time bidding him try to break it. Which when each did with all imaginable ease, the father addressed himself to them to this effect:—"O, my sons, behold the power of unity! for if you in like manner would but keep yourselves strictly conjoined in the bonds of friendship, it would not be in the power of any mortal to hurt you; but when once the ties of brotherly affection are dissolved, how soon do you fall to pieces, and are liable to be violated by every injurious hand that assaults you."

The Application.—Nothing is more necessary towards completing and continuing the well-being of mankind than their entering into and preserving friendships and alliances. The safety of a government depends chiefly upon this; and therefore it is weakened and exposed to its enemies, in proportion as it is divided by parties. "A kingdom divided against itself is brought to

desolation." And the same holds good among all societies and corporations of men, from the constitution of the nation, down to every little parochial vestry. But the necessity of friendship extends itself to all sorts of relations in life, as it conduces mightily to the advantage of particular clans and families. Those of the same blood and lineage have a natural disposition to unite together, which they ought by all means to cultivate and improve. It must be a great comfort to people, when they fall under any calamity, to know that there are many others who sympathise with them; a great load of grief is mightily lessened when it is parcelled out into many shares. And then joy, of all our passions, loves to be communicative, and generally increases in proportion to the number of those who partake of it with us. We defy the threats and malice of an enemy, when we are assured that he cannot attack us singly, but must encounter a bundle of allies at the same time. But they that behave themselves so as to have few or no friends in the world, live in a perpetual fear and jealousy of mankind, because they are sensible of their own weakness, and know themselves liable to be crushed or broken to pieces by the first aggressor.

CXLVII.—THE OLD WOMAN AND HER MAIDS.

A CERTAIN old woman had several maids, whom she used to call up to their work, every morning, at the crowing of the cock. The wenches, who found it grievous to have their sweet sleep disturbed so early, combined together, and killed the cock, thinking that when the alarm was gone, they might enjoy themselves in their warm beds a little longer. The old woman, grieved for the loss of her cock, and having, by some means or other, discovered the whole plot, was resolved to be even with them: for, from that time, she obliged them to rise constantly at midnight.

THE APPLICATION.—It can never be expected that things should be, in all respects, agreeable to our wishes; and, if they are not very bad indeed, we ought, in many cases, to be contented with them: lest when, through impatience, we precipitately quit our present condition of life, we may to our sorrow find, with the old saying, "that seldom comes a better." Before we attempt any alteration of moment, we should be certain what state it will produce; for when things are already bad, to make them worse by trying experiments, is an argument of great weakness and folly, and is sure to be attended with a too late repentance. Grievances, if really such, ought by all means to be redressed, provided we can be assured of doing it with success: but we had better, at any

time, bear some inconvenience, than make our condition worse by attempting to mend it.

CXLVIII.—THE FALCONER AND THE PARTRIDGE.

A FALCONER having taken a partridge in his nets, the bird begged hard for a reprieve, and promised the man, if he would let him go, to decoy other partridges into his net. "No," replies the falconer, "I was before determined not to spare you, but now you have condemned yourself by your own words; for he who is such a scoundrel as to offer to betray his friends to save himself, deserves, if possible, worse than death."

THE APPLICATION.—However it may be convenient for us to like the treason, yet we must be very destitute of honour not to hate and abominate the traitor. And accordingly history furnishes us with many instances of kings and great men, who have punished the actors of treachery with death, though the part they acted had been so conducive to their interest as to give them a victory, or perhaps the quiet possession of a throne. Nor can princes pursue a more just maxim than this; for a traitor is a villain of no principles, that sticks at nothing to promote his own selfish ends; he that betrays one cause for a great sum of money, will betray another upon the same account; and therefore it must be very impolitic in a state to suffer such wretches to live in it. Since, then, this is a maxim so good, and so likely at all times to be practised, what stupid rogues must they be who undertake such precarious, dirty work! If they miscarry, it generally proves fatal to them from one side or other: if they succeed, perhaps they may have the promised reward, but are sure to be detested, if suffered to live, by the very person that employs them.

CXLIX.—THE PORCUPINE AND THE SNAKES.

A PORCUPINE, wanting to shelter himself, desired a nest of snakes to give him admittance into their cave. They were prevailed upon, and let him in accordingly; but were so annoyed with his sharp prickly quills, that they soon repented of their easy compliance, and entreated the porcupine to withdraw, and leave them their hole to themselves. "No," says he, "let them quit the place that don't like it; for my part, I am well enough satisfied as I am."

THE APPLICATION.—Some people are of so brutish, inhospitable tempers, that there is no living with them without greatly incommoding ourselves. Therefore, before we enter into any degree of

friendship, alliance, or partnership with any person whatever, we should thoroughly consider his nature and qualities, his circumstances and his humour. There ought to be something in each of these respects to tally and correspond with our own measures, to suit our genius, and adapt itself to the size and proportion of our desires; otherwise our associations, of whatever kind, may prove the greatest plagues of our life. Young men are very apt to run into this error; and being warm in all their passions, throw open their arms at once, and admit into the greatest intimacy persons whom they know little of, but by false uncertain lights. Thus they sometimes receive a viper into their bosom instead of a friend, and take a porcupine for a consort, with whom they are obliged to cohabit, though she may prove a thorn in their sides as long as they live. A true friend is one of the greatest blessings in life; therefore, to be mistaken or disappointed of such enjoyment, when we hope to be in full possession of it, must be a great mortification. So that we cannot be too nice and scrupulous in our choice of those who are to be our companions for life; for they must have but a poor, shallow notion of friendship, who intend to take it like a lease, for a term of years only. In a word, the doctrine which this Fable speaks is to prepare us against being injured or deceived by a rash combination of any sort. The manners of the man we desire for a friend, of the woman we like for a wife, of the person with whom we would jointly manage and concert measures for the advancement of our temporal interest, should be narrowly and cautiously inspected, before we embark with them in the same vessel, lest we should alter our mind when it is too late, and think of regaining the shore, after we have launched out of our depth.

CL.—THE PEACOCK AND THE MAGPIE.

The birds met together upon a time to choose a king; and the peacock standing candidate, displayed his gaudy plumes, and catched the eyes of the silly multitude with the richness of his feathers: the majority declared for him, and clapped their wings with great applause. But just as they were going to proclaim him, the magpie stept forth into the midst of the assembly, and addressed himself thus to the new king: "May it please your majesty elect to permit one of your unworthy subjects to represent to you his suspicions and apprehensions in the face of this whole congregation: we have chosen you for our king, we have put our lives and fortunes into your hands, and our whole hope and dependence is upon you; if, therefore, the eagle, the vulture, or the kite,

should at any time make a descent upon us, as it is highly probable they will, may your majesty be so gracious as to dispel our fears, and clear our doubts about that matter, by letting us know how you intend to defend us against them?' This pithy, unanswerable question drew the whole audience into so just a reflection, that they soon resolved to proceed to a new choice. But from that time the peacock has been looked upon as a vain, insignificant pretender, and the magpie esteemed as eminent a speaker as any among the whole community of birds.

THE APPLICATION.—Form and outside, in the choice of a ruler, should not be so much regarded as the qualities and endowments of the mind. In choosing heads of corporations, from the king of the land down to the master of a company, upon every new election it should be inquired into, which of the candidates is most capable of advancing the good and welfare of the community, and upon him the choice should fall. But the eyes of the multitude are so dazzled with pomp and show, noise and ceremony, that they cannot see things really as they are; and from hence it comes to pass, that so many absurdities are committed and maintained in the world. People should examine and weigh the real weight and merit of the person, and not be imposed upon by false colours and pretences of I know not what.

CLI.—THE PARROT AND HIS CAGE.

A PARROT, which belonged to a person of quality, was fed every day with plenty of choice dainties, and kept in a stately cage, which was set abroad upon a marble table in the garden, that he might enjoy the light of the sky, and the freshness of the air, to the best advantage. His master, and all the family, when they talked to him, used the most tender, fond expressions, and the disorder of his feathers was smoothed with kindly touches by the fair hand of his lady: yet, notwithstanding this happy situation, he was uneasy, and envied the condition of those birds who lived free in the wilderness, and hopped up and down, unconfined, from bough to bough. He earnestly longed to lead the same life, and secretly pined with grief, because his wishes were denied him. After some time, however, it happened that the door of his cage was left unfastened, and the long-wished-for opportunity was given him of making an elopement. Accordingly, out he flew, and conveyed himself among the shades of a neighbouring wood, where he thought to spend the

remainder of his days in content. But, alas! poor Poll was mistaken: a thousand inconveniences, which he never dreamt of, attended this elopement of his, and he is now really that miserable creature which before his imagination only made him. He is buffeted by the savage inhabitants of the grove; and his imitation of the human voice, which formerly rendered him so agreeable, does but the more expose him to the fierce resentment of the feathered nation. The delicate food with which he used to be fed is no more; he is unskilled in the ways of providing for himself, and even ready to die with hunger. A storm of rain, thunder, and lightning, fills all the air, and he has no place to screen or protect him: his feathers are wetted with the heavy shower, and blasted with the flashes of lightning: his tender nature, suited to a milder climate, could not stand the shock: he even died under it: but just before he breathed his last, he is said to have made this reflection: "Ah, poor Poll! were you but in your cage again, you would never wander more."

THE APPLICATION.—This Fable may be a proper lesson to those who are possessed with a spirit of rambling, and trying experiments; who are so infatuated with these airy notions, that though they have a warm house over their heads, and a good table to eat at, kind indulgent parents, or fond husbands, yet they cannot be contented, but must sally forth into the wide world, and pass, as it were, into a new and untried being. People may have felt imaginary inconveniences at home; but as they have been used to live in a dependence upon others, let them but go abroad, and try to shift for themselves, and they will, in all probability, soon feel real miseries. No ship puts to sea without an experienced pilot; nor do armies take the field but under a general of conduct and courage: yet some women and children are so perverse and wrong-headed, that they will leave a quiet, safe port, and launch out into a world of troubles and dangers, without the least share of discretion to steer their course by. How can they hope to escape splitting upon every rock, who are thus rash and adventurous! A severe repentance, after such an elopement, is generally as certain as it is useless and unregarded.

CLII.—THE FOWLER AND THE RINGDOVE.

A FOWLER took his gun, and went into the woods a shooting. He spied a ringdove among the branches of an oak, and intended to kill it. He clapped the piece to his shoulder, and took his aim accordingly: but just as he was going to pull

the trigger, an adder, which he had trod upon, under the grass, stung him so painfully in the leg, that he was forced to quit his design, and threw his gun down in a passion. The poison immediately infected his blood, and his whole body began to mortify; which being perceived, he could not help owning it to be just. "Fate," says he, "has brought destruction upon me, while I was contriving the death of another."

The Application.—This is another lesson against injustice, a topic in which our just author abounds. And if we consider the matter fairly, we must allow it to be as reasonable that some one should do violence to us, as we should commit it upon another: when we are impartial in our reflections, thus we must always think. The unjust man, with a hardened, unfeeling heart, can do a thousand bitter things to others; but if a single calamity touches himself, oh how tender he is! how insupportable is the uneasiness it occasions! Why should we think others born to hard treatment more than ourselves? or imagine it can be reasonable to do to another what we ourselves should be unwilling to suffer? In our behaviour to all mankind, we need only ask ourselves these plain questions, and our consciences will tell us how to act. Conscience, like a good valuable domestic, plays the remembrancer to us upon all occasions, and gives us a gentle twitch when we are going to do a wrong thing. It does not, like the adder in the Fable, bite us to death, but only gives us kind cautions. However, if we neglect these just and frequent warnings, and continue in a course of wickedness and injustice, do not let us be surprised if Providence thinks fit, at last, to give us a home sting, and to exercise a little retaliation upon us.

CLIII.—THE SOW AND THE WOLF.

A sow had just farrowed, and lay in the sty with her whole litter of pigs about her. A wolf, who longed for one of them, but knew not how to come at it, endeavoured to insinuate himself into the sow's good opinion: and accordingly coming up to her, "How does the good woman in the straw do?" says he; "can I be of any service to you, Mrs. Sow, in relation to your little family here? if you have a mind to go abroad, and air yourself a little or so, you may depend upon it I will take as much care of your pigs as you could do yourself."—"Your humble servant," says the sow; "I thoroughly understand your meaning; and to let you know I do, I must be so free as to tell you, I had rather have your

room than your company; and therefore if you would act like a wolf of honour, and oblige me, I beg I may never see your face again."

THE APPLICATION.—The being officiously good-natured and civil is something so uncommon in the world, that one cannot hear a man make profession of it, without being surprised, or at least suspecting the disinterestedness of his intentions: especially when one who is a stranger to us, or, though known, is ill-esteemed by us, will be making offers of services, we have great reason to look to ourselves, and exert a shyness and coldness towards him. We should resolve not to receive even favours from bad kind of people; for should it happen that some immediate mischief was not couched in them, yet it is dangerous to have obligations to such, or to give them an opportunity of making a communication with us.

CLIV.—THE HUSBANDMAN AND THE STORK.

THE husbandman pitched a net in his fields to take the cranes and geese which came to feed upon the new-sown corn. Accordingly he took several, both cranes and geese, and among them a stork, who pleaded hard for his life, and, among other apologies which he made, alleged, that he was neither goose nor crane, but a poor harmless stork, who performed his duty to his parents to all intents and purposes, feeding them when they were old, and, as occasion required, carrying them from place to place upon his back. "All this may be true," replies the husbandman, "but as I have taken you in bad company, and in the same crime, you must expect to suffer the same punishment."

THE APPLICATION.—If bad company had nothing else to make us shun and avoid it, this methinks might be sufficient, that it infects and taints a man's reputation to as great a degree as if he were thoroughly versed in the wickedness of the whole gang. What is it to me if the thief, who robs me of my money, gives part of it to build a church? Is he ever the less a thief? Shall a woman's going to prayers twice a day save her reputation if she is known to be a malicious lying gossip? No: such mixtures of religion and sin make the offence but the more flagrant, as they convince us that it was not committed out of ignorance. Indeed, there is no living without being guilty of some faults, more or less, which the world ought to be good-natured enough to overlook, in consideration of the general faculty of mankind, when they are not too gross and too abundant. But when we are so abandoned to

stupidity, and a neglect of our reputation, as to keep bad company, however little we may be criminal in reality, we must expect the same censure and punishment as is due to the most notorious of our companions.

CLV.—THE PEACOCK AND THE CRANE.

THE peacock and the crane by chance met together in the same place: the peacock, erecting his tail, displayed his gaudy plumes, and looked with contempt upon the crane, as some mean ordinary person. The crane, resolving to mortify his insolence, took occasion to say, that peacocks were very fine birds indeed, if fine feathers could make them so; but that he thought it a much nobler thing to be able to rise above the clouds, than to strut about upon the ground, and be gazed at by children.

THE APPLICATION.—It is very absurd to slight or insult another upon his wanting a property which we possess, for he may, for anything we know, have as just reason to triumph over us, by being master of some good quality, of which we are incapable. But, in regard to the Fable before us, that which the peacock values himself upon, the glitter and finery of dress, is one of the most trifling considerations in nature, and what a man of sense would be ashamed to reckon even as the least part of merit. Indeed, children, and those people who think much about the same pitch with them, are apt to be taken with varnish and tinsel: but they who examine by the scale of common sense, must find something of weight and substance before they can be persuaded to set a value. The mind which is stored with virtuous and rational sentiments, and the behaviour which speaks complaisance and humility, stamps an estimate upon the possessor, which all judicious spectators are ready to admire and acknowledge. But if there be any merit in an embroidered coat, a brocade waistcoat, a shoe, a stocking, or a sword-knot, the person who wears them has the least claim to it: let it be ascribed where it justly belongs, to the several artisans who wrought and disposed of the materials of which they consist. This moral is not intended to derogate anything from the magnificence of fine clothes and rich equipages, which, as times and circumstances require, may be used with decency and propriety enough; but one cannot help being concerned, lest any worth should be affixed to them any more than their own intrinsic value.

CLVI.—THE COUNTRYMAN AND THE SNAKE.

A VILLAGER, in a frosty, snowy winter, found a snake under a hedge almost dead with cold: he could not help having compassion for the poor creature, so brought it home, and laid it upon the hearth near the fire; but it had not lain there long before (being revived with the heat) it began to erect itself, and fly at the wife and children, filling the whole cottage with dreadful hissings. The countryman hearing an outcry, and perceiving what the matter was, catched up a mattock, and soon despatched him, upbraiding him at the same time in these words, "Is this, vile wretch! the reward you make to him that saved your life? Die as you deserve; but a single death is too good for you."

THE APPLICATION.—'Tis the nature of ingrates to return evil for good; and the moralists in all ages have incessantly declaimed against the enormity of this crime, concluding that they who are capable of hurting their benefactors are not fit to live in a community; being such as the natural ties of parent, friend, or country, are too weak to restrain within the bounds of society. Indeed, the sin of ingratitude is so detestable, that as none but the most inhuman temper can be guilty of it, so in writing to men, there is no occasion to use many words, either in exposing the vice itself, or in dissuading people from the commission of it. Therefore it is not likely that a person of Æsop's sagacity would have compiled this Fable without having something else in view, besides this trite and obvious subject. He certainly intended to put us in mind, that as none but a poor silly clown would go to take up a snake and cherish it, so we shall be very negligent and ill-advised if, in doing good offices, we do not take care to bestow our benevolence upon proper objects. It was not at all unnatural in the snake to hiss, and brandish his tongue, and fly at the first that came near him; as soon at the person that saved his life as any other; indeed, more likely, because nobody else had so much to do with him. Nor is it strange at any time to see a reprobate fool throwing his poisonous language about, and committing his extravagancies against those, more especially, who are so inadvertent as to concern themselves with him. The snake and the reprobate will not appear extraordinary in their malevolence; but the sensible part of mankind cannot help thinking those guilty of indiscretion who receive either of them into their protection.

CLVII.—THE SWALLOW AND OTHER BIRDS.

A FARMER was sowing his field with flax; the swallow observed it, and desired the other birds to assist her in picking the seed up, and destroying it, telling them that flax was that pernicious material of which the thread was composed which made the fowlers' nets, and by that means contributed to the ruin of so many innocent birds; but the poor swallow, not having the good fortune to be regarded, the flax sprung up, and appeared above the ground. She then put them in mind once more of their impending danger, and wished them to pluck it up in the bud, before it went any farther. They still neglected her warnings, and the flax grew up into the high stalk. She yet again desired them to attack it, for that it was not yet too late. But all that she could get was to be ridiculed and despised for a silly, pretending prophet. The swallow, finding all her remonstrances availed nothing, was resolved to leave the society of such unthinking, careless creatures, before it was too late. So quitting the woods, she repaired to the houses, and forsaking the conversation of the birds, has ever since made her abode among the dwellings of men.

THE APPLICATION.—As men, we should always exercise so much humanity as to endeavour the welfare of mankind, particularly of our acquaintance and relations; and if by nothing farther, at least by our good advice. When we have done this, and, if occasion required, continued to repeat it a second or third time, we shall have acquitted ourselves sufficiently from any imputation upon their miscarriages; and have nothing more to do but to separate ourselves from them, that we may not be involved in their ruin, or be supposed to partake of their error. This is an excommunication which reason allows: for, as it would be cruel on the one side to persecute and hurt people for being mistaken, so on the other, it would be indiscreet and over-complaisant, to keep them company through all their wrong notions, and act contrary to our opinion, out of pure civility.

CLVIII.—THE TRUMPETER TAKEN PRISONER.

A TRUMPETER being taken prisoner in battle, begged hard for quarter, declaring his innocence, and protesting that he neither had, nor could kill any man, bearing no arms but only his trumpet, which he was obliged to sound at the word

of command. "For that reason," replied his enemies, "we are determined not to spare you; for though you yourself never fight, yet with that wicked instrument of yours, you blow up animosity between other people, and so become the occasion of much bloodshed."

THE APPLICATION.—A man may be guilty of murder who has never handled a sword, or pulled a trigger, or lifted up his arm with any mischievous weapon. There is a little incendiary called the tongue, which is more venomous than a poisoned arrow, and more killing than a two-edged sword. The moral of the Fable, therefore, is this, that if, in any civil insurrection, the persons taken in arms against the government deserve to die, much more do they, whose devilish tongues gave birth to the sedition, and excited the tumult. When wicked priests, instead of preaching peace and charity, employ that engine of scandal, their tongue, to foment rebellions, whether they succeed in their designs or no, they ought to be severely punished; for they have done what in them lay to set folks together by the ears; they have blown the trumpet, and sounded the alarm; and if thousands are not destroyed by the sword, it is none of their fault.

CLIX.—THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE.

A HARE insulted a tortoise upon account of his slowness, and vainly boasted of her own great speed in running. "Let us make a match," replied the tortoise; "I'll run with you five miles for five pounds, and the fox yonder shall be the umpire of the race." The hare agreed, and away they both started together; but the hare, by reason of her exceeding swiftness, outran the tortoise to such a degree, that she made a jest of the matter; and, finding herself a little tired, squatted in a tuft of fern that grew by the way, and took a nap, thinking that if the tortoise went by, she could at any time fetch him up, with all the ease imaginable. In the meanwhile the tortoise came jogging on with a slow but continued motion, and the hare, out of a too great security, and confidence of victory, oversleeping herself, the tortoise arrived at the end of the race first.

THE APPLICATION.—Industry and application to business make amends for the want of a quick and ready wit. Hence it is that the victory is not always to the strong, nor the race to the swift. Men of fine parts are apt to despise the drudgery of business, but by affecting to show the superiority of their genius upon many occasions, they run into too great an extreme the other way, and the

administration of their affairs is ruined through idleness and neglect. What advantage has a man from the fertility of his invention, and the vivacity of his imagination, unless his resolutions are executed with a suitable and uninterrupted rapidity? In short, your men of wit and fire, as they are called, are oftentimes sots, slovens, and lazy fellows; they are generally proud and conceited to the last degree; and, in the main, not the fittest persons for either conversation or business. Such is their vanity, they think the sprightliness of their humour inconsistent with a plain, sober way of thinking and speaking, and able to atone for all the little neglects of their business and persons. But the world will not be thus imposed upon: the man who would gain the esteem of others, and make his own fortune, must be one that carries his point effectually, and finishes his course without swerving or loitering. Men of dull parts, and a slow apprehension, assisted by a continued diligence, are more likely to attain this, than your brisk retailers of wit, with their affected spleen and indolence: and if business be but well done, it is no matter whether it be done by the sallies of a refined wit, or the considering head of a plain, plodding man.

CLX.—THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

A WOLF, clothing himself in the skin of a sheep, and getting in among the flock, by this means took the opportunity to devour many of them. At last the shepherd discovered him, and cunningly fastening a rope about his neck, tied him up to a tree which stood hard by: some other shepherds happening to pass that way, and observing what he was about, drew near, and expressed their admiration at it. "What," says one of them, "brother, do you like hanging of sheep?"—"No," replies the other, "but I like hanging of a wolf whenever I catch him, though in the habit and garb of a sheep." Then he showed them their mistake, and they applauded the justice of the execution.

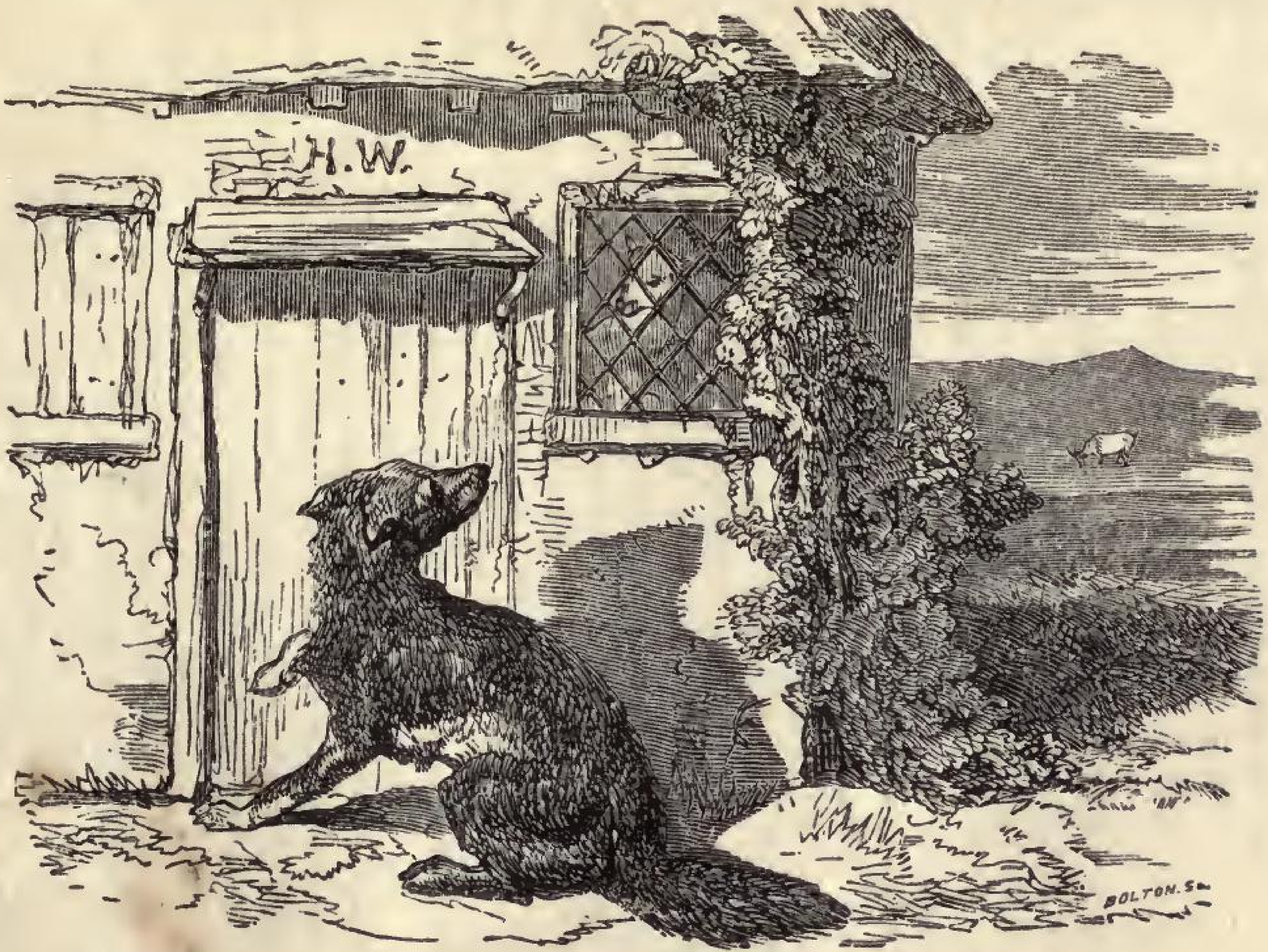
THE APPLICATION.—This Fable shows us that no regard is to be had to the mere habit or outside of any person, but to undisguised worth and intrinsic virtue. When we place our esteem upon the external garb before we inform ourselves of the qualities which it covers, we may often mistake evil for good, and instead of a sheep, take a wolf into our protection. Therefore, however innocent or sanctified any one may appear as to the vesture wherewith he is clothed, we may act rashly, because we may be imposed upon, if from thence we take it for granted that he is inwardly as

good and righteous as his outward robe would p[illegible] he is. Men of judgment and penetration do not use to give an implicit credit to a particular habit, or a peculiar colour, but love to make a more exact scrutiny; for he that will come up to the character of an honest, good kind of man, when stripped of his sheep's clothing, is but the more detestable for his intended imposture; as the wolf was but the more obnoxious to the shepherd's resentment, by wearing a habit so little suiting with his manners.

CLXI.—THE WOLF AND THE KID.

The goat going abroad to feed, shut up her young kid at home, charging him to bolt the door fast, and open it to nobody till she herself should return. The wolf, who lay lurking just by, heard this charge given, and soon after came and knocked at the door, counterfeiting the voice of the goat, and desiring to be admitted. The kid, looking out at a window, and finding the cheat, bid him go about his business; for however he might imitate a goat's voice, yet he appeared too much like a wolf to be trusted.

The Application.—As it is impossible that young people should steer their course aright in the world before they are acquainted with the situation of the many dangers which lie in their way, it is therefore necessary that they should be under the government and direction of those who are appointed to take charge of their education, whether they are parents, or tutors by them entrusted with the instruction of their children. If a child has but reason enough to consider at all, how readily should it embrace the counsel of its father! how attentively listen to his precepts! and how steadily pursue his advice! The father has already walked in the difficult wilderness of life, and has observed every danger which lies lurking in the paths of it, to annoy the footsteps of those who never trod the way before. Of these, with much tenderness and sincere affection, he makes a discovery to his son; telling him what he must avoid, and directing him how to make a safe, honourable, and advantageous journey. When, therefore, the child refuses to follow the directions of so skilful a guide, so faithful, so loving, and so sincere a friend, no wonder if he falls into many mischiefs, which otherwise he might have escaped, unpitied, and unlamented by all that know him, because he obstinately contemned the kind admonitions of him that truly wished and intended his happiness, and perversely followed the examples of those who decoyed him out of the way of virtue into the thorny mazes of vice and error. Nor should children take it ill if the commands of



P. 168.

their parents sometimes seem difficult and disagreeable; perhaps upon experiment they may prove as pleasant and diverting as if they had followed their own choice; this, however, they may be assured of, that all such cautions are intended out of true love and affection, by those who are more experienced than themselves, and therefore better judges what their conduct should be.

CLXII.—THE YOUNG MAN AND HIS CAT.

A CERTAIN young man used to play with a cat, of which he grew so fond, that at last he fell in love with it, to such a degree, that he could rest neither night nor day for the excess of his passion. At last he prayed to Venus, the goddess of beauty, to pity him, and relieve his pain. The good-natured goddess was propitious, and heard his prayers: before he rose up from kneeling, the cat, which he held in his arms, was transformed into a beautiful girl. The youth was transported with joy, and married her that very day. At night they went to bed, and as the new bride lay encircled in the embraces of her amorous husband, she unfortunately heard a mouse behind the hangings, and sprung from his arms to pursue it. Venus, offended to see her sacred rites profaned by such an indecent behaviour, and perceiving that her new convert, though a woman in outward appearance, was a cat in her heart, she made her return to her old form again, that her manners and person might be agreeable to each other.

THE APPLICATION.—People, as to their manners and behaviour, take a strong bias from custom and education, but a much stronger from nature. Her laws are so strong, that it is in vain for us to go to oppose them; and we may refine and improve, but can never totally alter her works.

Upon this account it is that we oftentimes see silly, awkward blockheads displaying their idiotism and folly through all their ensigns of dignity; for some natures are so coarse and rustic, that all the embroidery of a court cannot conceal them. Doubtless such people were intended by nature for nothing above driving hogs to a fair, and laughing at the jokes of a country Merry Andrew. Fortune has found them worthy of her favours, and given them a lift out of the mire; but yet they do not fail to give frequent indications of their true composition, by a thousand little dirty actions. A fine equipage, and a great estate, may raise a man to an exalted station, and procure a respect for his outward person; notwith-

standing which, it may so happen that every time he speaks and acts, he cannot help playing the fool for the blood of him.

CLXIII.—THE ASS EATING THISTLES.

An ass was loaded with good provisions of several sorts, which, in time of harvest, he was carrying into the fields for his master and the reapers to dine upon. By the way he met with a fine large thistle, and being very hungry, began to mumble it; which, while he was doing, he entered into this reflection: "How many greedy epicures would think themselves happy amidst such a variety of delicate viands as I now carry! But to me this bitter prickly thistle is more savoury and relishing than the most exquisite and sumptuous banquet."

The Application.—Happiness and misery, and oftentimes pleasure and pain, exist merely in our opinion, and are no more to be accounted for than the difference of tastes. "That which is one man's meat, is another man's poison," is a proposition which ought to be allowed in all particulars, where the opinion is concerned, as well as in eating and drinking. Our senses must inform us whether a thing pleases or displeases, before we can declare our judgment of it; and that is to any man good or evil which his own understanding suggests to him to be so, and not that which is agreeable to another's fancy. And yet as reasonable and as necessary as it is to grant this, how apt are we to wonder at people for not liking this or that, or how can they think so and so! This childish humour of wondering at the different tastes and opinions of others occasions much uneasiness among the generality of mankind; but if we consider things rightly, why should we be more concerned at others differing from us in their way of thinking upon any subject whatever, than at their liking cheese or mustard, one or both of which we may happen to dislike? In truth, he that expects all mankind should be of his opinion is much more stupid and unreasonable than the ass in the Fable.

CLXIV.—THE FOX WITHOUT A TAIL.

A fox being caught in a steel trap by his tail, was glad to compound for his escape with the loss of it; but upon coming abroad into the world, began to be so sensible of the disgrace such a defect would bring upon him, that he almost wished he had died rather than left it behind him. However, to make the best of a bad matter, he formed a project in his head to call an assembly of the rest of the foxes, and

propose it for their imitation, as a fashion which would be very agreeable and becoming. He did so; and made a long harangue upon the unprofitableness of tails in general, and endeavoured chiefly to show the awkwardness and inconvenience of a fox's tail in particular; adding, that it would be both more graceful and more expeditious, to be altogether without them; and that, for his part, what he had only imagined and conjectured before, he now found by experience; for that he never enjoyed himself so well, and found himself so easy, as he had done since he cut off his tail. He said no more, but looked about him with a brisk air to see what proselytes he had gained: when a sly old thief in the company, who understood trap, answered him with a leer, "I believe you may have found a conveniency in parting with your tail; and when we are in the same circumstances perhaps we may do so too."

THE APPLICATION.—If men were but generally as prudent as foxes, they would not suffer so many silly fashions to obtain, as are daily brought in vogue, for which scarce any reason can be assigned, besides the humour of some conceited, vain creature; unless, which is full as bad, they are intended to palliate some defect in the person that introduces them. The petticoat of a whole sex has been sometimes swelled to such a prodigious extent, to screen an enormity of which only one of them has been guilty. And it is no wonder that Alexander the Great could bring a wry-neck into fashion in a nation of slaves, when we consider what power of this nature some little insignificant dapper fellows have had among a free people.

CLXV.—THE BEES, THE DRONES, AND THE WASP.

A PARCEL of drones got into a hive among the bees, and disputed the title with them, swearing that the honey and the combs were their goods. The bees were obliged to go to law with them, and the wasp happened to be judge of the cause, one who was well acquainted with the nature of each, and therefore the better qualified to decide the controversy between them. Accordingly, "Gentlemen," says he (speaking to both plaintiff and defendant), "the usual method of proceeding in these courts is pretty chargeable and slow withal; therefore, as you are both my friends, and I wish you well, I desire you would refer the matter to me, and I will decide betwixt you instantly." They were both pleased with the offer, and returned him thanks. "Why,

then" says he, "that it may appear who are the just proprietors of these honeycombs (for being both so nearly alike as you are in colour, I must needs own the point is somewhat dubious), do you," addressing himself to the bees, "take one hive; you," speaking to the drones, "another, and go and make honey as fast as you can, that we may know, by the taste and colour of it, who has the best title to this in dispute." The bees readily accepted the proposal; but the drones would not stand to it; and so Judge Wasp, without any further ceremony, declared in favour of the former.

THE APPLICATION.—Nothing is so sure a sign of a man's being, or at least thinking himself in the wrong, as his refusing to come to a reference. And how happy would it be for the public, if our judges now-a-days were empowered to despatch causes in that easy, expedite way, which the wasp in the Fable made use of. But as it is, the impudent, idle, good-for-nothing drones of the nation many times possess those favours and benefits which should be the rewards of men of parts and industry.

Princes may easily be imposed upon, if they will take every little fellow's word for the measure of his own merit. And it is, indeed, scarce possible that the encouragements of a court should always be dispensed to the most deserving men; but such as are too modest to offer themselves. But it highly concerns any government, in the dispensation of its favours, to distinguish those who have behaved well; and not to let places of profit and advantage be run away with by drones, who never exerted the least degree of merit.

CLXVI.—THE FOX IN THE WELL.

A FOX, having fallen into a well, made a shift, by sticking his claws into the sides, to keep his head above water. Soon after, a wolf came and peeped over the brink, to whom the fox applied himself very earnestly for assistance, entreating that he would help him to a rope, or something of that kind, which might favour his escape. The wolf, moved with compassion at his misfortune, could not forbear expressing his concern:—"Ah! poor Reynard," says he, "I am sorry for you with all my heart: how could you possibly come into this melancholy condition?"—"Nay, prithee, friend," replies the fox, "if you wish me well, do not stand pitying of me, but lend me some succour as far as you can: for pity is but cold comfort when one is up to the chin in water, and within a hair's breadth of starving or drowning."

The Application.—Pity, indeed, is of itself but poor comfort at any time, and unless it produces something more substantial, is rather impertinently troublesome than any way agreeable. To stand bemoaning the misfortunes of our friends, without offering some expedient to alleviate them, is only echoing to their grief, and putting them in mind that they are miserable. He is truly my friend, who with a ready presence of mind supports me, not he who condoles with me on my ill-success, and says he is sorry for my loss. In short, a favour or obligation is doubled by being well timed; and he is the best benefactor, who knows our necessities, and complies with our wishes, even before we ask him.

CLXVII.—THE FOX AND THE WOLF.

The wolf, having laid in a store of provision, kept close at home, and made much of himself. The fox observed this, and thinking it something particular, went to visit him, the better to inform himself of the truth of the matter. The wolf excused himself from seeing him by pretending he was very much indisposed. All this did but confirm the fox in his suspicions; so away he goes to a shepherd, and made discovery of the wolf, telling him he had nothing else to do but to come with a good weapon, and knock him on the head as he lay in his cave. The shepherd followed his directions, and killed the wolf. The wicked fox enjoyed the cave and provisions to himself, but enjoyed them not long, for the same shepherd passing afterwards by the same hole, and seeing the fox there, despatched him also.

The Application.—This Fable seems to be directed against the odious trade of informing; not that giving information against criminals and enemies of the public is in itself odious, for it is commendable; but the circumstances and manner of doing it, oftentimes make it a vile and detestable employment. He that accuses another, merely for the sake of the promised reward, or in hopes of getting his forfeited estate, or with any other such mercenary view, nay, even to save his own life, whatever he gets by the bargain, is sure to lose his reputation; for, indeed, the most innocent company is not safe with such a one in it, nor the neighbourhood secure in which he lives. A villain of this stamp, whose only end is getting, will as soon betray the innocent as the guilty; let him but know where there is a suspected person, and propose the reward, and he will scarce fail to work the suspicion up to high treason, or be at a loss to give sufficient proofs of it. We have no small comfort concerning this sort of people, when we consider how

improbable it is that they should thrive or prosper long in their ill-gotten possessions; for he that can betray another for the sake of a little peif, must be a man of such bad principles, that it cannot be for the interest of any community to suffer him to live long in it. Besides, he himself will not be contented with one single villany; and there is no fear but he will provoke Justice to hurl down upon his head, at least, as great a calamity as he, by his malicious information, has brought upon another.

CLXVIII.—THE FROG AND THE MOUSE.

THERE was once a great emulation between the frog and the mouse, which should be master of the fen, and wars ensued upon it; but the crafty mouse, lurking under the grass in ambuscade, made sudden sallies, and often surprised the enemy at a disadvantage. The frog excelling in strength, and being more able to leap abroad and take the field, challenged the mouse to single combat; the mouse accepted the challenge, and each of them entered the lists, armed with the point of a bulrush instead of a spear. A kite, sailing in the air, beheld them afar off; and while they were eagerly bent upon each other, and pressing on to the duel, this fatal enemy descended souse upon them, and with her crooked talons carried off both the champions.

THE APPLICATION.—Nothing so much exposes a man's weak side, and lays him so open to an enemy, as passion and malice. He, whose attention is wholly fixed upon forming a project of revenge, is ignorant of the mischiefs that may be hatching against him from some other quarter, and, upon the attack, is unprovided with the means of defending or securing himself. How are the members of a commonwealth sometimes divided among themselves, and inspired with rancour and malice to the last degree, and often upon as great a trifle as that which was the subject-matter of debate between the frog and the mouse, not for any real advantage, but merely who shall get the better in the dispute! But such animosities, as insignificant and trifling as they be among themselves, are yet of the last importance to their enemies, by giving them many fair opportunities of falling upon them, and reducing them to misery and slavery. O Britons, when will ye be wise? When will ye throw away the ridiculous distinctions of party, those ends of bulrushes, and by a prudent union secure yourselves in a state of peace and prosperity—a state of which, if it were not for your intolerable foolish and unnecessary divisions at home, all the powers upon earth could never deprive you?

CLXIX.—THE MAN AND THE WEASEL.

A MAN had caught a weasel, and was just going to kill it. The poor creature, to escape death, cried out in a pitiful manner, "O pray do not kill me, for I am useful to you, and keep your house clear from mice."—"Why truly," says the man, "if I thought you did it purely out of love to me, I should not only be inclined to pardon you, but think myself mightily obliged to you: but whereas you not only kill them, but yourself do the same mischief they would do, in eating and gnawing my victuals, I desire you would place your insignificant services to some other account and not to mine." Having said this he took the wicked vermin, and strangled it immediately.

THE APPLICATION.—This Fable is pointed at those who are apt to impute actions, which are done with a private view of their own, to their zeal for the public. This is the case of many a poor Grub-street writer, who perhaps is for no party but himself, and of no principle but what is subservient to his own interest, yet has the impudence to cry himself up for a former confessor of the cause that happens to flourish, a thorough honest man, who durst show himself in the worst of times And with this politic view, there are a hundred thousand men in the nation well attached to which party you please, who are serving the interest of that side in their several capacities. By this way of working they have a double number of constant customers of the same faction; and, secondly, as they are entitled to some remote share in the government whenever their faction succeeds. But such a pretence to favour, is, in truth, little better than that of the weasel. Both may chance to have done the services they boast of; but as they were principally intended for the promotion of their own private affairs, whatever they might occasionally produce, cannot be a sufficient ground for them to raise any merit upon. A highwayman may as well plead in his own behalf, that he never robbed any but men of unsound principles. But how absurd would such a pretence be!

CLXX.—ÆSOP AND THE IMPERTINENT FELLOW.

ÆSOP'S master came home one day somewhat earlier than usual, and there happening to be no other slave in the house but Æsop, he was ordered to get supper ready as fast as he could. So away he runs to light a candle, in order to kindle his fire; and the weather being warm, and it wanting a pretty deal of night, he went up and down to several houses before

he could speed; at last, however, he found what he wanted, and, being in haste, he made no scruple of returning directly over the market-place, which was his nearest way home. But, as he went along, an impertinent fellow among the crowd caught him by the sleeve, and would fain have been arch upon him. "O rare Æsop!" says he, "what occasion for a candle, old boy? what, are you going to light the sun to bed!"—"Let me alone," says Æsop, "I am looking for a man." And having said this, away he scuttled home as fast as he could.

THE APPLICATION.—It is not every one who calls himself a man, or bears the appearance of one, that truly deserves the name. If man be a reasonable creature, and none ought to be allowed for such but those who fully come up to that definition, it is certain one would have occasion for more light than that of the sun to find them out by: and it is plain that our old philosopher did not take the impertinent fellow in the Fable for one. Nor, indeed, should such be looked upon as reasonable creatures, who, with empty nonsense, which they call wit, unseasonably interrupt men of thought and business. When one is disposed to be merry, one may bear with any shallow, flashy buffoonery; as music, that is not the most elegant, will keep up the spirits when once they are raised; but when the mind happens to be in a serious cast, and is to be wholly intent upon any matter of importance, nothing is so offensive as a fool or a fiddle.

CLXXI.—THE HART AND THE VINE.

A HART, being pursued hard by the hunters, hid himself under the broad leaves of a shady spreading vine. When the hunters were gone by, and had given him over for lost, he, thinking himself very secure, began to crop and eat the leaves of the vine. By this means the branches, being put into a rustling motion, drew the eyes of the hunters that way; who seeing the vine stir, and fancying some wild beasts had taken cover there, shot their arrows at a venture, and killed the hart, who, before he expired, uttered his dying words to this purpose: "Ah! I suffer justly for my ingratitude, who could not forbear doing an injury to the vine that so kindly concealed me in the time of danger."

THE APPLICATION.—Ingratitude has always been esteemed the biggest of crimes, and what, as it were, comprehends all other vices within it. Nor can we say that this estimation is rashly or unadvisedly made, for he that is capable of injuring his benefactors,

what will he scruple towards another? If his conscience cannot be felt by the weight of an obligation added to it, much less will it have any influence where there is none. So that, upon the whole, we may conclude, that the man who has been once guilty of ingratitude, will not stick at any other crime of an inferior nature. Since there are no human laws to punish this infamous, prevailing mischief, it would be a great piece of human prudence to mark and observe this kind of criminals, in order to avoid all manner of communication with them. And if this were strictly put in execution, it could be looked upon as no other than a just and proper punishment.

CLXXII.—THE DRUNKEN HUSBAND.

A CERTAIN woman had a drunken husband, upon whom when she had endeavoured to reclaim several ways to no purpose, she tried this stratagem:—When he was brought home one night, dead drunk, as it seems he frequently used to be, she ordered him to be carried to a burial-place, and there laid in a vault, as if he had been dead indeed. Thus she left him and went away, till she thought he might be come to himself, and grown sober again. When she returned and knocked at the door of the vault, the man cried out, "Who's there?"—"I am the person," says she, in a dismal tone, "that waits upon the dead folks, and I am come to bring you some victuals."—"Ah! good waiter," says he, "let the victuals alone, and bring me a little drink, I beseech thee." The woman, hearing this, fell a tearing her hair, and beating her breast in a woeful manner. "Unhappy wretch that I am," says she, "this was the only way that I could think of to reform the beastly sot; but instead of gaining my point, I am only convinced that this drunkenness is an incurable habit, which he intends to carry with him into the other world."

THE APPLICATION.—This Fable is intended to show us the prevalence of custom; and how, by using ourselves much to any evil practice, we may let it grow into such a habit as we may never be able to divest ourselves of. In anything that we are sensible may be prejudicial to either our health or fortunes, we should take care not to let our inclinations run up into a habit: for though the former may be easily checked at our first setting out, and directed which way we please, yet the latter, like a headstrong, unruly horse, in his full career, will have its own course, and we are hurried impetuously on, without the power of controlling it. As the passions of young men are warm, and their imaginations

lively, it would be wrong to endeavour to tie them up from the pursuit of innocent pleasures. But those among them that think at all, can never form a more useful and happy resolution, than not to suffer themselves to be drawn into a habit, even in indifferent and trifling things. He that keeps himself free from the slavery of habit, will always be at leisure to distinguish what is good for him from that which is otherwise; and then there is no fear but his cool unbiassed judgment will direct him to such pursuits as will be least hurtful, if not most useful to him.

CLXXIII.—THE BLACKAMOOR.

A CERTAIN man, having bought a blackamoor, was so simple as to think that the colour of his skin was only dirt and filth, which he had contracted for want of due care under his former master. This fault, he fancied, might easily be removed. So he ordered the poor black to be put into a tub, and was at a considerable charge in providing ashes, soap, and scrubbing-brushes for the operation. To work they went, rubbing and scouring his skin all over, but to no manner of purpose; for when they had repeated their washings several times, and were grown quite weary, all they got by it was, that the wretched blackamoor caught cold and died.

THE APPLICATION.—Many people attempt impossibilities for want of considering the nature of things aright. For, as palpable a blunder as this man in the Fable committed, there are those who are guilty of as great mistakes: especially when they endeavour, by fruitless cultivations, to raise graces from the mind or body, of which neither is capable. When any one went to meddle with arts and sciences, for which his genius was not well and properly adapted, the Greeks had a proverb to turn it into ridicule, by saying he was no more fit for the business than an ass to play upon the harp. In short, when people learn to dance without shape or mien, to sing or play upon music without voice or an ear, painting or poetry without a genius, it is attempting to wash the blackamoor white. They can never attain their end, but at the same time expose themselves to the jocose humours of those that behold them. Instead of a grace, they acquire a deformity; as some boys at school, whom the master, by endeavouring to whip into memory and bright parts, confirms stupid and invincible blockheads for ever.

CLXXIV.—THE TRAVELLERS.

Two men travelling upon the road, one of them saw an axe lying upon the ground, where somebody had been hewing timber. So taking it up, says he, "I have found an axe."—"Do not say *I*," says the other, "but *we* have found! for, as we are companions, we ought to share it betwixt us." But the first would not consent. However, they had not gone far before the owner of the axe, hearing what was become of it, pursued them with a warrant; which, when the fellow that had it perceived, "Alas!" says he to his companion, "we are undone."—"Nay," says the other, "do not say *we*, but *I* am undone; for as you would not let me share the prize, neither will I share the danger with you."

The Application.—This Fable hints to us the conveniency, if not the necessity, of making our friendships firm and lasting; and, to this purpose, nothing is so requisite as a strict observance of the rules of honour and generosity; for the very life and soul of friendship subsists upon mutual benevolence, upon conferring and receiving obligations on either hand. A stingy reserved behaviour starves it; it ought to be open, free, and communicative, without the least tincture of suspicion or distrust; for jealousy in friendship is a certain indication of a false heart, though in love it may be the distinguishing mark of a true one. Nor is there anything merely chimerical or romantic in this notion: for, if we examine, we shall find, that reason will confirm the truth, and experience evince the utility of it. He that hopes for assistance and accommodation in any exigency or time of misfortune, must lay in a provision for it, by watching the necessities of his acquaintance, and relieving the most deserving of them in their straits, by a ready and willing contribution. By this means, gratitude, which is never wanting to an honest mind, will secure us a reasonable fund in reversion; and all the favours we bestow, will, like the tide of a river, in due season flow back again upon us.

CLXXV.—THE FISHERMAN.

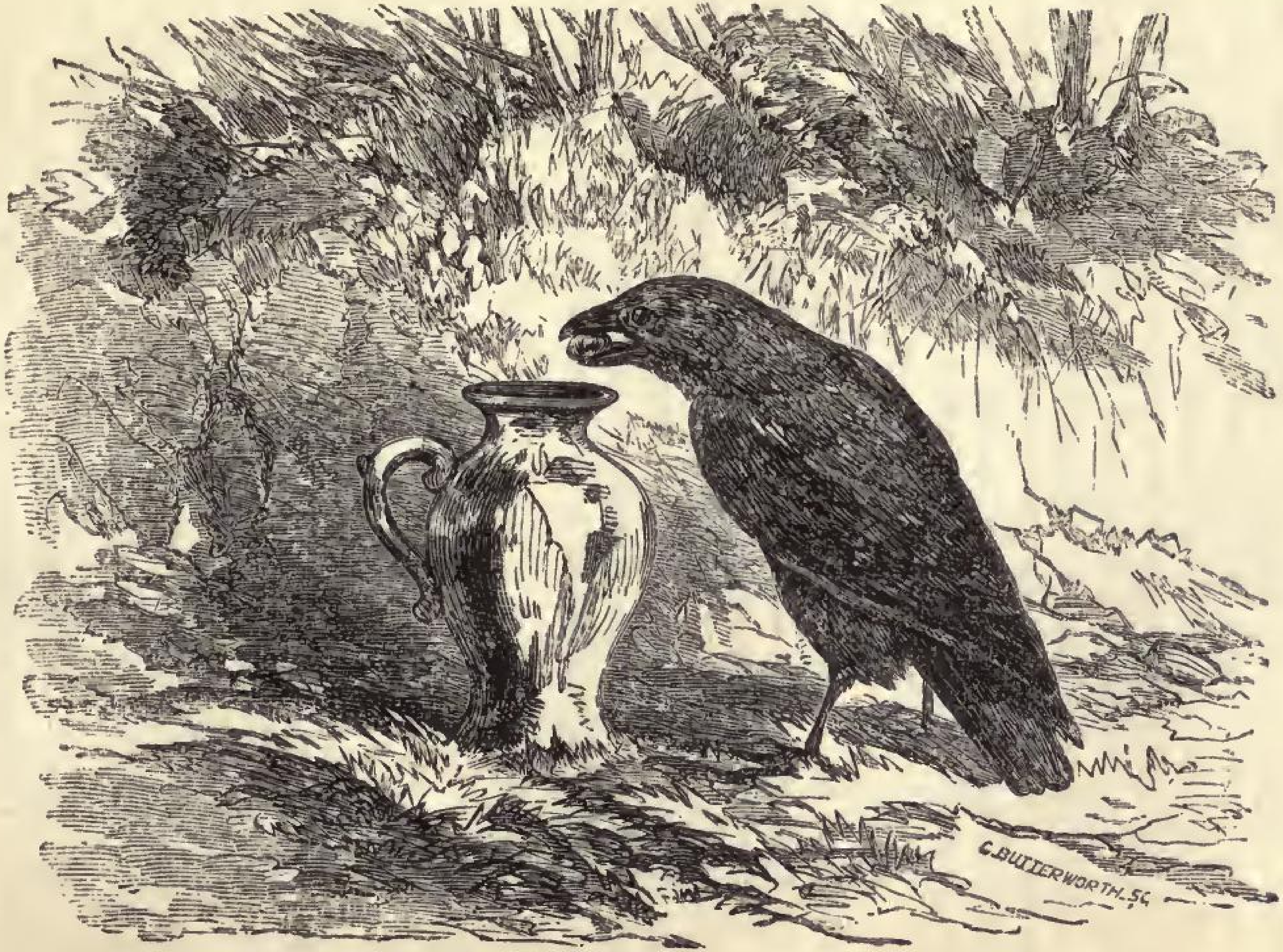
A certain fisherman having laid his nets in the river, and encompassed the whole stream from one side to the other, took a long pole, and fell a beating the water to make the fish strike into his nets. One of the neighbours that lived thereabouts, seeing him do so, wondered what he meant; and going up to him, "Friend," says he, "what are you doing here? Do you think it is to be suffered that

you shall stand splashing and dashing the water, and make it so muddy that it is not fit for use? Who do you think can live at this rate?" He was going on in a great fury, when the other interrupted him, and replied, "I do not much trouble myself how you are to live with my doing this, but I assure you that I cannot live without it."

THE APPLICATION.—This Fable is levelled at those, who, as the proverb says, "love to fish in troubled waters." There are some men of such execrable principles, that they do not care what mischief or what confusion they occasion in the world, provided they may but gratify some little, selfish appetite. A thief will set a whole street on fire, to get an opportunity of robbing one house; an ill-natured person will kindle the flame of discord among friends and neighbours, purely to satisfy his own malicious temper. And among the great ones, there are those who, to succeed in their ambitious designs, will make no scruple of involving their country in divisions and animosities at home, and sometimes in war and bloodshed abroad; provided they do but maintain themselves in power, they care not what havoc and desolation they bring upon the rest of mankind. They see all around them confounded with faction and party rage, without the least remorse or compassion. The widow's tears, the orphan's cries, and the sighs of despair itself, cannot affect them. Like the fisherman in the Fable, they boldly pursue their sport, and only reply, "It must be so, because we cannot live as we would do without it." What brutish, unsociable sentiments are these, such as a mere state of nature would scarce suggest! Those that have any traces of equity in their breast, or any regard for the rights of mankind, should enter their protest against such notions as these, and oppose the practice of them with all their might and strength.

CLXXVI.—MERCURY AND THE CARVER.

MERCURY having a mind to know how much he was esteemed among men, transformed himself into the shape of one of them; and going into a carver's shop where little images were to be sold, he saw Jupiter, Juno, himself, and most of the other gods and goddesses. So, pretending that he wanted to buy, says he to the carver, "What do you ask for this?" and pointed to the figure of Jupiter. "A groat," says the other. "And what for that?" meaning Juno. "I must have something more for that," says he. "Well, and what's the price of this?" says Mercury, nodding his head at himself. "Why," says the man, "if you are in earnest,



P. 185.

and will buy the other two, I will throw you that into the bargain."

THE APPLICATION.—Nothing makes a man so cheap and little, in the eyes of discerning people, as his inquiring after his own worth, and wanting to know what value others set upon him. He that often busies himself in stating the account of his own merit, will probably employ his thoughts upon a very barren subject; those who are full of themselves being generally the emptiest fellows. Some are so vain as to hunt for praise, and lay traps for commendation; which when they do, it is a pity but they should meet with the same disappointment as Mercury in the Fable. He that behaves himself as he should do, need not fear of procuring a good share of respect, or raising a fair flourishing reputation. These are the inseparable attendants of those that do well, and in course follow the man that acquits himself handsomely. But then they should never be the end or motive of our pursuits; our principal aim should be, the welfare and happiness of our country, our friends, and ourselves; and that should be directed by the rules of honour and virtue. As long as we do this, we need not be concerned what the world thinks of us, for a curiosity of that kind does but prevent what it most desires to obtain. Fame, in this respect, is like a whimsical mistress; she flies from those who pursue her most, and follows such as show the least regard to her.

CLXXVII.—THE CROW AND THE PITCHER.

A CROW, ready to die with thirst, flew with joy to a pitcher, which he beheld at some distance. When he came, he found water in it indeed, but so near the bottom, that with all his stooping and straining, he was not able to reach it: then he endeavoured to overturn the pitcher, that so at least he might be able to get a little of it; but his strength was not sufficient for this; at last, seeing some pebbles lie near the place, he cast them one by one into the pitcher; and thus by degrees raised the water up to the very brim, and satisfied his thirst.

THE APPLICATION.—Many things which cannot be effected by strength, or the vulgar way of enterprising, may yet be brought about by some new and untried means. A man of sagacity and penetration, upon encountering a difficulty or two, does not immediately despair; but if he cannot succeed one way, employs his wit and ingenuity another; and to avoid or get over an impediment, makes no scruple of stepping out of the paths of his forefathers. Since our happiness, next to the regulation of our minds, depends

altogether upon our having and enjoying the conveniences of life, why should we stand upon ceremony about the methods of obtaining them, or pay any deference to antiquity upon that score? If almost every age had not exerted itself in some new improvements of its own, we should want a thousand arts, or at least many degrees of perfection in every art, which at present we are in possession of. The invention of anything which is more commodious for the mind or body than what they had before, ought to be embraced readily, and the projector of it distinguished with a suitable encouragement. Such as the use of the compass, for example, from which mankind reaps so much benefit and advantage, and which was not known to former ages. When we follow the steps of those who have gone before us in the old beaten track of life, how do we differ from horses in a team, which are linked to each other by a chain or harness, and move on in a dull, heavy pace, to the tune of their leader's bells? But the man who enriches the present fund of knowledge with some new and useful improvement, like a happy adventurer at sea, discovers, as it were, an unknown land, and imports an additional trade into his own country.

CLXXVIII.—THE FOX AND THE ASS.

An ass finding a lion's skin, disguised himself with it, and ranged about the forest, putting all the beasts that saw him in bodily fear. After he had diverted himself thus for some time, he met a fox; and being desirous to frighten him too, as well as the rest, he leapt at him with some fierceness, and endeavoured to imitate the roaring of the lion. "Your humble servant, sir," says the fox; "if you had held your tongue, I might have taken you for a lion as the others did; but now you bray, I know who you are."

The Application.—This is so trite and common a subject that there is scarce any one who is ignorant of it. A man is known by his words, as a tree is by the fruit; and if we would be apprised of the nature and qualities of any one, let him but discourse, and he himself will speak them to us better than another can describe them. We may therefore perceive, from this Fable, how proper it is for those to hold their tongues who would not discover the shallowness of their understandings.

> Asses and owls, unseen, themselves betray,
> When these attempt to hoot, or those to bray.—Garth.

The deepest rivers are most silent; the greatest noise is ever found where there is the least depth of water. And it is a true

observation, that those who are the weakest in understanding, and more slow of apprehension, are generally the strongest in opinion, and most precipitate in uttering their crude conceptions. When with a secret awe we regard the grave dress and important mien of some senatorian person whom we have chanced to meet in a coffee-house, what a speaker do we often think he must be before we hear him speak! His air breathes the seriousness of a privy-councillor, and his erect aspect the dignity of an eminent patriot; but he utters himself, and undeceives us; he brays, and tells the whole company what he is.

CLXXIX.—THE HEN AND THE SWALLOW.

A HEN, finding some serpent's eggs in a dunghill, sat upon them, with a design to hatch them. A swallow perceiving it, flew towards her, and with some warmth and passion—"Are you mad," says she, "to sit hovering over a set of pernicious creatures as you do? Be assured, the moment you bring them to light, you are the first they will attack and wreak their venomous spite upon."

THE APPLICATION.—This Fable is only to put us in mind, once more, of what we have already, more than once, met with in the course of these Fables, that we should never have anything to do with ill men, no, not even to do them kindnesses. Men of ill principles are a generation of vipers, that ought to be crushed under our feet, and destroyed the first opportunity. Every rogue should be looked upon by honest men as a poisonous serpent; it is not sufficient that they avoid and keep clear of him, but, if they have any value for their own safety, they should prosecute and maul him, and render him incapable of ever doing mischief. The man who is occasionally, or by accident, one's enemy, may be mollified by kindness, and reclaimed by good usage; such a behaviour reason and morality both expect from us. But we should ever resolve, if not to suppress, at least to have no dealings with those whose blood is tinctured with hereditary habitual villany, and their nature leavened with evil to such a degree, as to be incapable of a reformation.

CLXXX.—THE DOG INVITED TO SUPPER.

A GENTLEMAN, having invited an extraordinary friend to sup with him, ordered a handsome entertainment to be prepared. His dog, observing this, thought with himself that now would be a good opportunity for him to invite another dog, a friend of his, to partake of the good cheer. Accordingly

he did so; and the strange dog was conducted into the kitchen, where he saw mighty preparations going forward. Thought he to himself, "This is rare! I shall fill my belly charmingly by-and-by with some of these dainties! I'll eat enough to last me a week! Oh; how nicely and delicious shall I feed!" While he stood and thought thus with himself, his tail wagged, and his chops watered exceedingly, and this drew the observation of the cook towards him; who, seeing a strange cur, with his eyes intent upon the victuals, stole softly behind him, and, taking him up by the two hind legs, threw him out of a window into the street. The hard stones gave him a very severe reception, and he was almost stunned with the fall; but, recovering himself, he ran yelping and crying half the length of the street, the noise of which brought several other dogs about him; who, knowing of the invitation, began to inquire how he had fared. "Oh," says he, "admirably well; I never was better entertained in my life; but, in troth, we drank a little too hard; for my part, I was so overtaken, that I scarce know which way I got out of the house."

The Application.—There is no depending upon a second-hand interest; unless we know ourselves to be well with the principal, and are assured of his favour and protection, we stand but upon a slippery foundation. They are strangers to the world, who are so vain as to think they can be well with any one by proxy; they may by this means be cajoled, bubbled, and imposed upon, but are under great uncertainty as to gaining their point, and may probably be treated with scorn and derision in the end. Yet there are not wanting, among the several species of fops, silly people of this sort, who pride themselves in an imaginary happiness, from being in the good graces of a great man's friend's friend. Alas! the great men themselves are but too apt to deceive and fail in making good their promises; how then can we expect any good from those who do but promise and vow in their names? To place a confidence in such sparks is indeed so false a reliance, that we should be ashamed to be detected in it; and like the cur in the Fable, rather own we had been well treated, than let the world see how justly we had been punished for our ridiculous credulity.

CLXXXI.—JUPITER AND THE HERDSMAN.

A herdsman, missing a young heifer that belonged to his herd, went up and down the forest to seek it; and having walked a great deal of ground to no purpose, he fell a pray-

ing to Jupiter for relief, promising to sacrifice a kid to him if he would help him to a discovery of the thief. After this he went on a little farther, and came near a grove of oaks, where he found the carcass of his heifer, and a lion grumbling over it, and feeding upon it. This sight almost scared him out of his wits; so down he fell upon his knees once more, and addressed himself to Jupiter, "O Jupiter," says he, "I promised thee a kid to show me the thief, but now I promise thee a bull, if thou wilt be so merciful as to deliver me out of his clutches."

The Application.—How ignorant and stupid are some people who form their notions of the Supreme Being from their own poor shallow conceptions: and then, like froward children with their nurses, think it consistent with infinite wisdom, and unerring justice, to comply with all their whimsical petitions. Let men but live as justly as they can, and a just Providence will give them what they ought to have. Of all the involuntary sins which men commit, scarce any are more frequent than that of their praying absurdly and improperly, as well as unseasonably, when their time might have been employed so much better. The many private collections sold up and down the nation, do not a little contribute to this injudicious practice; which is the more to be condemned, in that we have so incomparable a public Liturgy; one single address whereof (except the Lord's Prayer) may be pronounced the best that ever was compiled, and alone preferable to all the various manuals of occasional devotion, which are vended by hawkers and pedlars about our streets. It is as follows:—

"Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, who knowest our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking, we beseech thee to have compassion upon our infirmities, and those things, which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask, vouchsafe to give us for the worthiness of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

CLXXXII.—THE FIGHTING COCKS.

Two cocks were fighting for the sovereignty of the dunghill; and one of them having got the better of the other, he that was vanquished crept into a hole, and hid himself for some time: but the victor flew up to an eminent place, clapt his wings, and crowed out "Victory." An eagle who was watching for his prey near the place, saw him, and making a stoop, trussed him in his talons, and carried him off. The cock that had been beaten perceiving this, soon quitted his

hole, and shaking off all remembrance of his late disgrace, gallanted the hens with all the intrepidity imaginable.

THE APPLICATION.—This Fable shows the impropriety and inconvenience of running into extremes. Much of our happiness depends upon keeping an even balance in our words and actions, in not suffering the scale of our reason to mount us too high in the time of prosperity, nor to sink us too low with the weight of adverse fortune.

It is a question—Which shows people in the most contemptible light, exulting immoderately upon a fresh accession of good, or being too abjectly cast down at the sudden approach of evil? We are apt to form our notions of the man from the stability of his temper in this respect, and account him a brave or a wise man, according to the proportion of equanimity which he exerts upon any change of his condition. But though our reputation were no ways concerned in the case, and a man were not to be reckoned a coxcomb for being elated, or a coward for being dejected with the vicissitudes of life, yet, the true regard of our own private satisfaction should incline us to play the philosopher, and learn to keep our spirits calm and even; because life would be a labyrinth of perplexities without it. One sudden turn would come so thick up the back of another, that we should be bewildered in the quick succession of joys and terrors, without having so much as a quiet moment to ourselves.

CLXXXIII.—THE YOUNG MEN AND THE COOK.

TWO young men went into a cook's shop, under pretence of buying meat; and while the cook's back was turned, one of them snatched up a piece of beef and gave it to his companion, who presently clapt it under his cloak. The cook turning about again, and missing his beef, began to charge them with it: upon which, he that first took it, swore bitterly he had none of it: he that had it, swore as heartily that he had taken up none of his meat. "Why, look ye, gentlemen," says the cook, "I see your equivocation; and though I cannot tell which of you has taken my meat, I am sure, between you both, there is a thief and a couple of rascals."

THE APPLICATION.—An honest man's word is as good as his oath: and so is a rogue's too; for he that will cheat and lie, why should he scruple to forswear himself? Is the latter more criminal than either of the former? An honest man needs no oath to oblige him; and a rogue only deceives you the more certainly

by it, because you think you have tied him up, and he is sure you have not. In truth, it is not easy with the eye of reason to discern that there is any good in swearing at all. We need not scruple to take an honest man's bare asseveration; and we shall do wrong if we believe a rogue, though he swears by the most solemn oaths that can be invented. There are, besides, a sort of people who are rogues, and yet do not know that they are such; who, when they have taken an oath, make a scruple of breaking it, but rack their invention to evade it by some equivocation or other; by which, if they can but satisfy their acquaintance, and serve their own scheme, they think all is well, and never once consider the black and heinous guilt which must attend such a behaviour. They solemnly call the Supreme Being to witness. To what? To a sham, an evasion, a lie. Thus these unthinking, prevaricating wretches, at the same time that they believe there is a God, act as if there were none; or, what is worse, dare affront him in the highest degree. They, who by swearing would clear themselves of a crime of which they are really guilty, need not be at much pains about wording their oath; for express themselves how they will, they are sure to be forsworn.

CLXXXIV.—THE JACKDAW AND THE SHEEP.

A JACKDAW sat chattering upon the back of a sheep; "Peace, you noisy thing," says the sheep, "if I were a dog, you durst not serve me so."—"That is true enough," replies the jackdaw, "I know very well who I have to do with; I never meddle with the surly and revengeful; but I love to plague such poor helpless creatures as you are, that cannot do me any harm again."

THE APPLICATION.—Many people in the world are of the temper of this jackdaw in the Fable, who do mischief for mischief's sake; and at the same time, are never s w ell pleased as when they do it to the innocent and undeserving. They love themselves too well to offer an injury to one of their own malicious principles, for fear of a suitable return; but desire no better grounds at any time for being hurtful than the prospect of being so with impunity. How inconsistent are such proceedings as these with honour and generosity! How opposite to the character of a great and good man; and how directly contrary to the rules prescribed for the behaviour of noble and heroic spirits!

CLXXXV.—THE PLOUGHMAN AND FORTUNE.

A PLOUGHMAN, as he was ploughing the ground, found a treasure. Transported with joy, he immediately began to return thanks to the ground, which had been so liberal and kind to him. Fortune observed what he did, and could not forbear discovering her resentment of it. She instantly appeared to him, and, "You fool," says she, "what a blockhead you are to be thanking the ground thus, and take no notice of me! you sot, you! if you had lost such a treasure, instead of finding it, I should have been the first you would have laid the blame upon."

THE APPLICATION.—If our affairs succeed and go well, we ought to let them have the credit of it to whose interest it is chiefly owing, and whom, upon any miscarriage or ill-management, we should have found fault with. That just rule of equity, "to do as we would be done unto," should, as near as we can, be observed in every action of our lives. But vanity and peevishness dispose us too often to break it; one makes us ascribe that to our own good address which perhaps is owing to some accident; the other puts us upon charging Fortune, or somebody besides ourselves, with that ill success, for which we may probably be indebted to our own stupidity and negligence only. What titles of honour, what stations of dignity, what places of profit in church and state, are now and then possessed by dull, useless wretches, who never once dreamt that they were obliged to Fortune alone for their happiness in obtaining them. Yet, if the case were quite otherwise, if those places had been filled with men of known abilities, and these creatures left low and undistinguished as their own merit, it is ten to one but they would have cursed their stars, fretted at their ill luck, and stormed at the barbarous treatment of their capricious fortune.

CLXXXVI.—THE APE AND HER TWO YOUNG ONES.

AN ape, having two young ones, was doatingly fond of one, but disregarded and slighted the other. One day she chanced to be surprised by the hunters, and had much ado to get off: however, she did not forget her favourite young one, which she took up in her arms, that it might be the more secure: the other, which she neglected, by natural instinct leaped upon her back, and so away they scampered together. But it unluckily fell out, that the dam, in her precipitate flight, blinded with haste, dashed her favourite's

head against a stone, and killed it. The hated one, clinging close to her rough back, escaped all the danger of the pursuit.

THE APPLICATION.—This Fable is designed to expose the folly of some parents, who, by indulging and humouring their favourite children, spoil and ruin them; while those of whom they have been the least fond have done very well. The child that knows it can command its parents' affections will hardly be brought to know how to obey. The fondness of indiscreet parents to favourite children, is blind as love itself; they are so far from seeing any blemishes or imperfections in them, that their very deformity is beauty, and all their ugly tricks graces. Thus, without ever being checked and corrected for their faults, but rather applauded and caressed for them, when they come abroad upon the theatre of the world, what rock will they not split upon? While the child who is so happy as to escape these very tender regards, these pernicious indulgences, is obliged to be good and honest in its own defence. The parent looks upon it with an eye clear from the mist of fondness. He has no regard to its dislike or approbation, but for his own credit puts it into such a way of education as reason dictates, and forces it to be as accomplished as its capacity will admit.

CLXXXVII.—THE SHEPHERD TURNED MERCHANT.

A SHEPHERD, that kept his sheep near the sea, one clear summer's day drove them close to the shore, and sat down upon a piece of rock to enjoy the cool breeze that came from the water. The green element appeared calm and smooth; and Thetis, with her train of smiling beautiful nymphs, seemed to dance upon the floating surface of the deep. The shepherd's heart thrilled with secret pleasure, and he began to wish for the life of a merchant. "O how happy," says he, "should I be to plough this liquid plain, in a pretty tight vessel of my own! and to visit the remote parts of the world, instead of sitting idle here, looking upon a parcel of senseless sheep while they are grazing! Then what ample returns should I make in the way of traffic! and what a short and certain path would this be to riches and honour!" In short, this thought was improved into a resolution; away he posted with all expedition, sold his flock and all that he had: then he bought a bark, and fitted it out for a voyage; he loaded it with a cargo of dates, and set sail for a mart that was held upon the coast of Asia, five hundred leagues off. He had not long been at sea, before the wind began to

blow tempestuously, and the waves to rage and swell. The violence of the weather increased upon him, his ship was in danger of sinking, and he was obliged to lighten her, by throwing all his dates overboard: after this his vessel was driven upon a rock near the shore, and split to pieces; he himself hardly escaping with life. Poor and destitute of subsistence, he applied himself to the man who had bought his flock, and was admitted to tend it as an hireling. He sat in the same place as before, and the ocean again looked calm and smooth. "Ah!" says he, "deceitful, tempting element, in vain you try to engage me a second time; my misfortunes have left me too poor to be again deluded the same way; and experience has made me so wise as to resolve, whatever my condition may be, never to trust to thy faithless bosom more."

THE APPLICATION.—Bought wit is the best; and the more variety of disappointments we meet with, the greater will be our experience, and the better we shall be qualified to rub through the world. Mankind has a strange propensity for things that are new and untried; and so strong a bias inclines them to shifting and changing that every one disrelishes his own profession, and wishes he had been of some other employment. The young academic, designed to the most grave of all professions, hates to think of his peculiar habit, of that formal, reserved deportment, by which he is to separate himself from what he counts the pleasures of the world, and bid adieu to that irregularity which youth so much delights in. He longs for a commission in the army, that he may be fashionably licentious, and indulge himself unquestioned in the wanton sallies of a brisk, youthful appetite. In the mean time, the old soldier, harassed out with laborious campaigns abroad, and vexed with the slow returns of his half-pay at home, repines at the happy condition of the ecclesiastic, fattening in ease and plenty, and sleeping unmolested in one of the upper stalls of a cathedral. With remorse he calls to mind his former perverseness in quitting a college life, and defeating the purpose of his relations, who had purchased the next reversion of a fat benefice for him. He shakes his head, and reflects, that if it had not been for his folly, instead of aching limbs and an empty purse, he might have enjoyed as much leisure and luxury as any priest in the land.

Thus, sometimes with, sometimes without reason, we are disgusted at our station, and even those who are embarked in another way; which, however, it may seem to be a misfortune entailed upon us, yet carries this advantage with it, that as we are almost

sure of being disappointed by a change, we are as certain likewise of gaining some experience by the bargain, and being wiser for the future.

CLXXXVIII.—THE YOUNG MAN AND THE LION.

THERE was a certain old man, who was lord of a very great estate, and had only one child, a son, of whom he was exceedingly tender and fond; he was likewise one very apt to be influenced by omens, dreams, and prognostics. The young man, his son, was mightily addicted to hunting, and used to be up early every morning to follow the chase; but the father happening to dream one night that his son was killed by a lion, took it so to heart that he would not suffer him to go into the forest any more. He built a fine castle for his reception, in which he kept him close confined, lest he should step out privately a-hunting, and meet his fate. Yet as this was purely the effect of his love and fondness for him, he studied to make his confinement as agreeable to him as possible; and, in order to it, furnished the castle with a variety of fine pictures, in which were all sorts of wild beasts, such as the son used to take delight in hunting, and among the rest, the portrait of a lion. This the young man viewed one day more attentively than ordinary; and being vexed in his mind at the unreasonable confinement which his father's dream had occasioned, he broke out into a violent passion, and looking sternly at the lion, "Thou cruel savage," says he, "it is to thy grim and terrible form that I owe my imprisonment; if I had a sword in my hand, I thus would run it through thy heart." Saying this he struck his fist at the lion's breast, and unfortunately tore his hand with a point of a nail which stuck in the wainscot, and was hid under the canvas. The wound festered, and turned to a gangrene; this threw the young man into a fever, and he died; so that the father's dream was fulfilled by the very caution that he took to prevent it.

THE APPLICATION.—This Fable, though it may seem to favour and encourage the notion of dreams, and such fancied discoveries of future events, is, however, intended to ridicule and explode them. What can be more absurd than the practice of those credulous fools, who, having faith enough to believe the veracity of oracles, had the impudence or stupidity to try to defeat them afterwards? This was making a god with one hand, and throwing him away with the other. First they ask the Almighty what he intends to

do. When he has told them, they believe and tremble, but are resolved to disappoint him if they can: nay, they think they can, and set about it accordingly. These low, inconsistent notions of God gave the first birth to Atheism; and were they not too common in the world still, that pernicious principle, if there be any such principle in reality, would be either entirely rooted out, or grow so thin as not to hinder the increase of virtue. When the Deity, which the generality of the world acknowledge, is used as if he were a Deity of irresolution, instability, mutability, and passion, men of any discernment immediately renounce such a Deity as that, and, for want of due consideration, remain Atheists; it being, indeed, less absurd of the two, not to believe in a Supreme Being at all, than to believe he is subject to the frailties of us wretched mortals, and governed by whim and fancy.

CLXXXIX.—THE HEN AND THE FOX.

A FOX, having crept into an out-house, looked up and down, seeking what he might devour, and at last spied a hen sitting upon the uppermost perch, so high that he could by no means come at her. He then had recourse to his old stratagem, "Dear cousin," says he, addressing himself to the hen, "how do you do? I heard that you were ill, and kept within; at which I was so concerned that I could not rest till I came to see you: pray, how is it with you now? Let me feel your pulse a little: indeed you do not look well at all." He was running on after this impudent, fulsome manner, when the hen answered him from the roost—"Truly, cousin Reynard, you are in the right on't, I never was in more pain in my life: I must beg your pardon for being so free as to tell you, that I see no company; and you must excuse me too for not coming down to you; for to say the truth, my condition is such, that I fear I should catch my death if I should do it."

THE APPLICATION.—There are some people in the world, whose address and conversation are so impertinent, so shocking, and disagreeable, that it is doing penance, and suffering a kind of bodily pain, to be in their company. When these familiar fools, with their repeated officiousness, ask us how we do, no wonder if we are really sick, for, how can we be well when they are near us? They either mean nothing, and are vain silly impertinents, whom we abhor, or cover some evil purpose under a disguise of nauseous palpable flattery, and therefore are to be treated with reserve and caution. A man who sees through flattery is indeed free from the

danger of it. But he should not be satisfied with that. If he is a public-spirited man, he ought to discountenance and expose the person that practises it, to prevent it from flourishing abroad, and hurting those who may not be wary enough to discern, or staunch enough to resist its attacks. The men of flattery, as they are in some degree or other, a common mischief, ought to be treated as common enemies; and, as it is generally their design to delude and impose upon others, if we can be beforehand with and disappoint them, we shall act, if not generously, yet, however, fairly and discreetly.

CXC.—THE MAN AND THE GNAT.

As a clownish fellow was sitting upon a bank, a gnat settled upon his leg, and stung it. He clapped his hand with great vehemence upon the place, with intention to kill the gnat; but the little nimble insect, skipping lightly between his fingers, escaped, and every time he struck, he gave himself a smart blow upon the leg, without being in the least able to touch the gnat. This provoked him very much, so that in the height of his passion he fell to invoking Hercules: "O mighty Hercules!" says he, "since nothing can withstand thy power, aid me, I beseech thee, against this pernicious gnat, and with thy invincible strength subdue him, in compassion to me, miserable creature, who am tormented with his venomous sting."

THE APPLICATION.—Many people, like the clown in the Fable, are apt to invoke the Almighty upon every little trifling accident that befalls them. Not in an habitual unmeaning exclamation, such as children and childish folks use, but in a serious deliberate meditation, conceived in a fit of rapture, and delivered from the closet or cabinet in the usual season of devotion. How many things are prayed for with much earnestness, which, if we were to inquire into them, are mere vanities, and such as we ought to be ashamed of having? Not that the Supreme Being, who is all-knowing, and present everywhere, can be supposed to be ignorant of every little thought of our souls, or unable to comply with the multiplicity of our wishes: but it is contrary to his exalted nature to condescend to our paltry selfish schemes, or to grant any of those petitions which we ourselves, if we considered, should be ashamed to put up.

CXCI.—THE DEER AND THE LION.

A DEER, being hard pressed by the hounds, found a cave, into which he rushed for security. But he was no sooner

got in, than he saw himself in the power of a lion, who lay couched at the farther end of the cave, and sprung upon him in an instant. Being at the point of death, he complained thus: "Unhappy creature that I am! I entered this cave to escape the pursuit of men and dogs, and am fallen into the jaws of the most cruel and rapacious of all wild beasts."

THE APPLICATION.—Some are so unfortunate as to be ever running into troubles and difficulties; their ill luck seems to ride them through a series of misfortunes, and, in the mean time, like stumbling horses, the oftener they are spurred, the more they flounce along in the dirt, and the more trips they make. But as much of this may be attributed to fear and hurry, which, whenever they take place, indispose and hinder us from acquitting ourselves as we should do, it is therefore highly necessary for such as would be thought to behave themselves like men, never to let fear have any share in their words or actions. This passion blinds us from discerning our true interest; it no sooner points out an evil to us, but it throws us into the utmost confusion in our manner and method of flying from it. We start from the present mischief before we have pitched upon a place of refuge, and in the hurry fall into a thousand worse accidents, which we have not time to observe and avoid. But all this is far below the character of a great and a good man. He dreads nothing more than shame, nor is ashamed of anything so much as fear. Not all the terrors of this, or any other world, can blind the eyes of his reason, or disarm his understanding. Honesty dictates to his conscience, and his conscience is the rule that guides all his actions; and in this happy situation of his mind, though the world were to be crushed, and tumbled in pieces about his ears, he would be found, without surprise, amidst the ruins of it. It is peculiar to knaves and fools to be flurried through a sense of their own guilt or shame, and to be always labouring under jealousies, doubts, distrusts, and disappointments.

CXCII.—THE GARDENER AND HIS DOG.

A GARDENER'S dog, frisking about the brink of a well in the garden, happened to fall into it. The gardener very readily ran to his assistance; but as he was endeavouring to help him out, the cur bit him by the hand. The man took this ungrateful treatment so unkindly, that he left him to shift for himself with this expostulation: "Wicked wretch," quoth he, "are you so unreasonable as to injure the hand that comes to save your life! the hand of me, your master,

P. 201.

who have hitherto fed and taken care of you! Die, as you deserve; for so mischievous and ill-natured a creature is not fit to live."

THE APPLICATION.—All the obligations you lay upon an ungrateful person are thrown away; and, therefore, they who would be esteemed wise as well as good, should use some exactness in the direction of their favours, as well as generosity in the disposal of them. For there are some of such malevolent tempers, that they are not only improper objects of our good nature, as to themselves, in being undeserving, but of such vile dispositions in respect to us, that we cannot approach them, though to do them a kindness, without endangering our own safety. Our good nature, therefore, as good a quality as it is, will not excuse us, if we fall into the hands of these kind of people: something must be imputed to our easiness and want of attention; and if we are so free as to bestow our favours without considering where we place them, the discerning part of mankind will rank us in the class of fools or madmen, instead of giving us the applause that is due to actions truly liberal.

CXCIII.—THE FOX AND THE GOAT.

A FOX having tumbled by chance into a well, had been casting about a long while, to no purpose, how he should get out again; when, at last, a goat came to the place, and wanting to drink, asked Reynard whether the water was good. "Good!" says he, "ay, so sweet, that I am afraid I have surfeited myself, I have drunk so abundantly." The goat, upon this, without any more ado, leapt in, and the fox, taking the advantage of his horns, by the assistance of them, as nimbly leapt out, leaving the poor goat at the bottom of the well to shift for himself.

THE APPLICATION.—The doctrine taught us by this Fable is no more than this, that we ought to consider who it is that advises us before we follow the advice. For, however plausible the counsel may seem, if the person that gives it is a crafty knave, we may be assured that he intends to serve himself in it, more than us, if not to erect something to his own advantage out of our ruin.

The little, poor, country attorney, ready to perish, and sunk to the lowest depths of poverty for want of employment, by such arts as these, draws the squire, his neighbour, into the gulf of the law, till laying hold of the branches of his revenue, he lifts himself out of obscurity, and leaves the other immured in the bottom of a mortgage.

CXCIV.—THE RAVEN AND SERPENT.

A HUNGRY raven, flying about in quest of his prey, saw a serpent basking himself upon the side of a sunny bank: down he soused upon him, and seized him with his horny beak, in order to devour him: but the serpent, writhing to and fro with the pain, bit the raven again with his venomous teeth to such a degree that he could not survive it. The raven, in the agonies of death, is said to have confessed that this judgment happened to him justly, since he had attempted to satisfy his craving appetite at the expense of another's welfare.

THE APPLICATION.—They who are of a ravenous, greedy temper, and for swallowing all that comes in their way, may chance to meet with a sting in the end. When people are actuated by an insatiable avarice, they stick at nothing: without considering the lawfulness, or even the real emolument of snapping at all, right or wrong, down it goes; and, if it has but the appearance of gain, they are for making a seizure let the consequence be what it will. Thus, the covetous, whom God and man abhor, punishes himself for his own iniquity. Being deaf to the voice of conscience, and the dictates of natural reason, and blind to everything but his own vile selfish views, throws himself after getting, with a precipitate violence, and often dashes himself to pieces upon an unseen rock.

CXCV.—THE FOX AND THE HEDGEHOG.

A FOX was swimming across a river; and, when he came to the other side, he found the bank so steep and slippery, that he could not get up it. But this was not all his misfortunes, for while he stood in the water deliberating what to do, he was attacked by a swarm of flies, who, settling upon his head and eyes. stung and plagued him grievously. A hedgehog, who stood upon the shore, beheld and pitied his condition, and withal offered to drive away the flies, which molested and teazed him in that sad manner. "Friend," replies the fox, "I thank you for your kind offer, but must desire you by no means to disturb these honest bloodsuckers that are now quartered upon me, and whose bellies are, I fancy, pretty well filled; for if they should leave me, a fresh swarm would take their places, and I should not have a drop of blood left in my whole body."

THE APPLICATION.—This Fable is recorded by Aristotle, who tells us, that Æsop spoke it to the Samians, as an argument to

dissuade them from deposing their great minister of state. And a shrewd and weighty one it is too: for a minister of state is either an honest, public-spirited man and labours for the good of the commonwealth, or he is chiefly intent, by all ways and means, upon filling his own coffers, and upon aggrandizing and enriching his relations. Now where the first happens, one need not say how much it behoves every particular man, and all in general, to wish for the continuance of so wise and good a patriot. Neither should they part with him merely for being one of the other stamp; for, however criminal he may be in having robbed and plundered the public, we should consider, that, like the flies in the Fable, he is pretty near full; and if he were to be removed, would only make way for some other more hungry, who would squeeze out of the poor people the remainder of their property.

CXCVI.—THE MASTER AND HIS SCHOLAR.

As a schoolmaster was walking upon the bank of a river, not far from his school, he heard a cry as of one in distress; advancing a few paces farther, he saw one of his scholars in the water hanging by the bough of a willow. The boy had, it seems, been learning to swim with corks; and now thinking himself sufficiently experienced, had thrown those implements aside, and ventured into the water without them; but the force of the stream having hurried him out of his depth, he had certainly been drowned, had not the branch of a willow which grew on the bank, providentially hung in his way. The master took up the corks, which lay upon the ground, and throwing them to his scholar, made use of this opportunity to read a lecture to him upon the inconsiderate rashness of youth. "Let this be an example to you," says he, "in the conduct of your future life, never to throw away your corks till time has given you strength and experience enough to swim without them."

The Application.—Some people are so vain and self-conceited, that they will run themselves into a thousand inconveniences, rather than be thought to want any assistance in any one respect. Now there are many little helps and accommodations in life, which they, who launch out into the wide ocean of the world, ought to make use of as supporters to raise and buoy them up till they are grown strong in the knowledge of men, and sufficiently versed in business, to stem the tide by themselves. Yet many, like the child in the Fable, through an affectation of being thought able and experienced, undertake affairs which are

too big for them, and venture out of their depth before they find their own weakness and inability.

Few are above being advised; nor are we ever too old to learn anything which we may be the better for. But young men, above all, should not disdain to open their eyes to example, and their ears to admonition. They should not be ashamed to furnish themselves with rules for their behaviour in the world. However mean it may seem to use such helps, yet it is really dangerous to be without them. As a man, who is lame with the gout, had better draw the observations of people upon him, by walking with a crutch, than expose himself to their ridicule by tumbling down in the dirt. It is as unnatural to see a young man throw himself out in conversation with an assuming air, upon a subject which he knows nothing of, as for a child of three months old to be left to go without its leading-strings. They are equally shocking and painful to the spectator. Let them have but patience till time and experience strengthen the mind of the one, and the limbs of the other, and they may both make such excursions as may not be disagreeable or offensive to the eye of the beholder.

CXCVII.—THE STONE AND THE MAN.

Æsop having been sent to see what company were at the bath, observed that many stumbled, both going in and coming out, at a stone which lay at the entrance, and that only one attempted to lay it aside. He accordingly returned and told his master there was but one person in the bath. Xanthus arriving, and seeing a multitude, asked him the reason of his false information. Æsop told him there was a great stone at the entrance, over which many stumbled, but one only removed the obstacle; so that there was only one man, the rest being little better than cyphers.

The Application.—Man being endued with reason, is expected to overcome every trifling difficulty which impedes his course in life: he, therefore, who stumbles at any little evil, when it is in his power to remove it, may be justly deemed a fool, and not a man.

CXCVIII.—THE EAGLE AND THE RING.

On a day appointed for a public festivity by the citizens of Samos, an eagle descended, snatched up the public ring, and afterwards dropped it into the lap of a slave. The astonished Samians applied to Xanthus to unfold the mystery, but he was not able. Æsop came forward for the

purpose, but on account of his insignificance and deformity he was despised. He, however, proved himself a more learned man than his master; for, addressing the people, he thus unfolded the mystery:—"Citizens of Samos, the eagle, you know, is the monarch of birds, and, as the public ring was dropped into the lap of a slave, it forbodes that soon some of the adjacent kings will attempt to overthrow your established laws, and entomb your liberty in slavery." Shortly after, letters arrived from Crœsus, of Lydia, requiring the Samians to pay tribute, or prepare for war.

THE APPLICATION.—Thus Æsop showed the learning of his mind, notwithstanding the insignificant appearance of his body; for, according to his own remarks (given by the Greek monk,) we should not only view the front of the house, but the tenant also; for frequently an upright and understanding soul dwells in a deformed and disordered body. It is not the shape of a cask that men admire, but the wine concealed therein.

CXCIX.—THE SEA AND THE RIVERS.

A SCHOLAR asked Xanthus, who was intoxicated, if it were possible to drink off the sea. "Oh, very easy," cried Xanthus, "I will engage to perform it myself." Upon this a wager was laid, and having exchanged rings they separated. The day following Xanthus missed his ring, and asked Æsop what was become of it. "I know not," said he, "but this I am confident of—we cannot stay here; for yesterday, when disguised with liquor, you betted your whole fortune that you would drink off the ocean; and to bind the wager, you exchanged the ring." Xanthus was alarmed, and asked Æsop if he could contrive to get rid of the wager. "To perform it," said Æsop, "is impossible; but how to avoid it I will show you. When you meet again, be as confident as ever, and order a table to be placed on the shore; let persons be prepared to lave the ocean with cups. When the multitude have assembled, then ask what was the wager. The reply will be, that you engaged to drink the sea. Hereupon you must address them thus, 'Citizens, you are not ignorant that many rivers discharge themselves into the sea. My agreement was to drink up the ocean, and not those streams. If you then can obstruct their course, I am ready to perform my engagement.'" Xanthus being pleased with the expedient, when the people assembled acted and

said as he was instructed, by which means he was not only highly applauded, but evaded the wager.

The Application.—At this public rejoicing, while Xanthus was drinking freely, Æsop had observed that Bacchus was the parent of three evils—the first voluptuousness, the second intemperance, and the third calumny or scandal. Man, when intoxicated, knows not what he says or does; like the scholar, he will demand impossibilities, and, like Xanthus, he will make dangerous promises; in short, he verifies the proverb, that when the wine is in, the wit is out: he must afterwards exercise all his ingenuity to overcome the evil effects of voluptuousness and intemperance, and to rectify the mistakes of unguarded loquacity. If this anecdote be true, (for it is recorded by the Greek monk,) Xanthus was a very weak prince indeed.

CC.—THE ONLY WISE MAN.

Æsop was commanded by his master, who designed to entertain the philosophers and orators, to stand at the gate and admit none but wise men. At the appointed time several came to the gate, requesting admittance. Æsop put this question to them all—"What stirs the dog?" At which they were much offended, supposing he meant to give them that appellation. At last one came who made this reply to his question—"His ears and his tail." Æsop, satisfied with this answer, admitted him, and conducted him to his master, saying, there was only one philosopher who had desired admittance. The day following, when they met at the schools, they reproached Xanthus, with treating them contemptuously, by permitting his servant to stand at the gate and salute them with the opprobrious epithet of dogs. Upon which Æsop was called, and asked how he dared to affront the gentlemen. Æsop replied to his master, "Did you not tell me that none but philosophers should be admitted?"—"And what are these?" said Xanthus, "do they not merit that character?"—"By no means," answered Æsop, "for when they came to the gate I demanded of them what stirs the dog, and but one among them all gave me a proper answer." Hereupon all agreed that Æsop had acted strictly as his master had commanded him.

The Application.—If simple the question, it betrays consummate folly to misinterpret it, and considerable ignorance not to answer it. Offence is often taken when none is intended; but the truly wise will ponder well before they complain. A man

of wit is always fond of displaying it, and nothing is more apt to be taken in dudgeon, though it may possess neither poignancy nor brilliancy. This anecdote is recorded by Maximus Planudes.

CCI.—ÆSOP AND HIS FELLOW SERVANTS.

A MERCHANT, then Æsop's master (according to the Greek monk) ordered all things to be got ready for an intended journey. When they were assigning to each servant his proportion of burthen, Æsop requested that he might have the lightest. Having been granted his choice, he took up the basket of bread, at which the other servants laughed, considering that burden enough for two. But when dinner-time came, Æsop, who had with great difficulty sustained his load, was commanded to set it down, and give an equal share of bread all round. His load being thus lightened one half, he pursued his journey with pleasure. At supper-time he was again ordered to distribute another share; after which, the basket being emptied, he led the van, and obliged those, who before had treated him with contempt, to applaud his ingenuity.

THE APPLICATION.—Many are apt to ridicule and censure actions which are afterwards found to have been suggested by judgment and policy. The other servants took up baskets which they thought best agreed with their strength, and laughed at Æsop who made choice of a burthen which was designed for two, and under the weight of which he absoluteiy groaned. But when they came to the end of their journey, they were convinced of their own folly, and of his superior understanding. The weight of their burthens still remained, and they were much fatigued and exhausted; but Æsop, to their great mortification, returned home comfortably, not being loaded at all. The man of prudence and discretion will, for the sake of future blessings, patiently submit to present evils.

CCII.—THE TONGUES.

ÆSOP'S master having invited a large company to dinner, he was ordered to furnish the feast with the choicest dainties. Æsop accordingly laid out the money in tongues, which he served up with an appropriate sauce. The guests much commended the first course, as it furnished them with matter for conversation; but the second and third being the same, they were astonished, as well as the gentleman of the house, who asked if there was nothing else provided but tongues,

and being answered there was not, he began to rail and abuse Æsop. "Did not I command you to prepare the choicest dainties?" "And what excels the tongue?" replied Æsop: "it is the great channel of learning and philosophy. By this noble organ addresses, commerce, contracts, eulogies, and marriages, are completely established. On this moves life itself; and, of course, nothing is equal to the tongue." The company extolled the wisdom of Æsop, and deemed it superior to that of his master. Some time after this Xanthus gave another entertainment to the same guests, and Æsop was ordered to procure the worst meats, when, constant to his purpose, he again provided tongues. Xanthus, more incensed still, asked him if this was the entertainment he had ordered, and Æsop declared that he had exactly fulfilled his commands; "for what," he remarked, "is worse than the tongue? Is it not frequently the ruin of empires, cities, and private connexions? Is it not the conveyance of calumnies and lies? In short, is it not the grand disturber of civil society?" Both master and company were filled with astonishment.

THE APPLICATION.—Æsop, by the entertainments which he had provided, paid a compliment to his master's company, who were scholars and philosophers, and reproached his master and master's wife, for Xanthus's lady was a noted shrew. The tongue is both a good and a bad member. By the tongue the philosopher conveys instruction: by the tongue the preacher advises and admonishes. In like manner, by the tongue, the dissatisfied rail, blaspheme, and express their resentment: by the tongue the termagant scolds. St. James, in the third chapter of his General Epistle, gives an admirable description of the tongue. "The tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father, and therewith curse we men, who are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed cursing and blessing!"

CCIII.—THE LOCUSTS AND GRASSHOPPER.

A CERTAIN man having gathered many locusts, killed them; and having with them taken a grasshopper, she thus bespoke him: "Sir, do not kill me, for I am no ways destructive, my whole employment being to charm to sleep the weary traveller;" upon which he let her go.

The Application.—Though Justice should not be "lame or blind amongst us," yet mercy is a noble attribute, and, if not rewarded with gratitude, never fails in bringing a blessing. This Fable was addressed by Æsop to Crœsus, who being disgusted with his comic appearance, was enraged that such a despicable-looking man would, by his counsels, prevent him from conquering the Samians, and threatened his immediate destruction; but upon Æsop's begging his mercy, and assuring him that in his insignificant body he would find an exalted mind, he not only spared his life, but was reconciled to the Samians (the locusts) at his request. Thus Æsop was the grasshopper who charmed the king with his learning, and was the happy means of re-establishing peace. This Fable is thus accounted for by the Greek monk.

CCIV.—THE WOOD AND THE SEA.

A piece of wood, floating on the sea, appeared at a distance to be something worth; but when driven on shore, it was considered insignificant and of no use.

The Application.—This Fable was addressed by Æsop to the citizens of Delphos, who, before his arrival, considered him a prodigy on account of the eminent character he had obtained; but, when he appeared, they paid little attention to his eloquence, being shocked at his meanness and deformity. In like manner the Delphians, whom Æsop had admired through the favourable report he had heard of them, were now in his eyes truly contemptible and ignorant. Appearances often deceive us, as has been already illustrated in the preceding Fable.

CCV.—THE MOUSE AND THE FROG.

Teh mouse being intimate with the frog, invited her to supper in the storehouse of a rich man, desiring her to make herself welcome. After this the frog invited the mouse, and that he might not be tired with swimming, she tied his legs to hers. This done, they endeavoured to go across the stream, but before they were half over, the mouse was drowned; and, when dying, declared the frog was the cause, and that some one more powerful than themselves would avenge his death. An eagle, beholding the mouse floating on the water, snatched at him, and with him took the frog: thus both fell a prey to the eagle.

The Application.—Those who dig a pit for others are frequently doomed to fall into it themselves. Thus spoke Æsop to the Delphians, intimating, that when he fell a victim to their in-

justice, he should not want an avenger, assured that all Greece and Babylon would unite for that purpose. This Fable being dissimilar to that which bears the same characters, yet evidently *Æsopian*, is given only on the authority of Maximus Planudes.

CCVI.—THE WIDOW AND WIDOWER.

A WOMAN, having lately buried her husband, wept daily over his grave. One, who was ploughing not far off, fell in love with her; and, leaving his oxen, went to the grave and mourned with her. She asked why he wept. "Because," he replied, "I have lately buried an amiable wife, and find it gives me ease."—"Such is my fate," said the widow. "Then," returned the widower, "as we are united in trouble, why should we not be joined in marriage, since we love each other?" While the man was paying his addresses, some villains took away his oxen, upon which he went home and wept much. The woman inquired why he wept now, and he answered, "I have cause for sorrow; it is a fresh calamity, from which I cannot extricate myself—my oxen are stolen, and I am now without the means of support."

THE APPLICATION.—In the time of distress, the greatest consolation we can find is in the sympathetic kindness of balmy friendship. This Fable was addressed to one Demas (according to Maximus Planudes), a voluntary friend, while deploring his fate in prison, having been falsely accused of stealing a golden cup out of the temple of Apollo, which had been artfully concealed in his baggage, for the purpose of accusing him of theft and sacrilege. After having escaped many dangers, he was unable to extricate himself, and the friendship of Demas was the only comfort he now enjoyed.

CCVII.—THE HARE, THE EAGLE, THE HORNET, AND JUPITER.

A HARE, being pursued by an eagle, retreated into the nest of a hornet. The eagle repulsed the hornet, and destroyed the hare. The hornet traced out the nest of the eagle, and demolished her eggs. The next time, the eagle built her nest higher, but the hornet still pursued, and again destroyed them. The third time, the eagle soared and deposited her eggs between the knees of Jupiter, invoking his protection. The hornet, composing a ball of dirt, dropped it into Jupiter's

lap, who, forgetting the eggs, shook all off together. Being informed by the hornet that this was in revenge for a former injury, he endeavoured to reconcile them, lest the progeny of his favourite bird should be destroyed: the hornet persisting, he respited the hatching of the eggs till the time when the hornets sally forth.

THE APPLICATION.—Power is always prone to take revenge, and triumph over the unfortunate. Retaliation generally succeeds, and the most powerful are frequently annoyed for their acts of injustice. This Fable Æsop addressed to the Delphians, while they were dragging him to a precipice; but though he held out to them that Jupiter would avenge his fall, and that they should dearly suffer for their inhumanity, still they persevered in dooming him to death.

CCVIII.—THE HUSBANDMAN AND ASSES.

A CERTAIN husbandman was growing aged, who, having never beheld the city, desired his servants to convey him thither, that he might see it before he died. As he went, he was overtaken by a violent storm and gloomy darkness, so that the asses which drew the carriage mistook their way, and guided him to a precipice, where, being upon the verge of approaching ruin, he thus exclaimed, "Oh, Jove! what injury have I committed, that hath incensed thee to cause this misfortune, especially that I should owe my death, not to generous horses, nor active mules, but to dull and despicable asses."

THE APPLICATION.—That man is indeed unfortunate who is under the control or guidance of the ignorant; who, when difficulties arise, have neither prudence nor ability to guide and extricate him. This was Æsop's last Fable, addressed to the Delphians while in the act of throwing him down the precipice, and his last words are a further illustration of it:—"It is my unhappy fate to fall, not by the hands of persons of worth and abilities, but by those of the vilest and most despicable of men."

The predictions held out in former Fables were soon after fulfilled; for a destructive pestilence having raged among them, they were told by the oracle, that it was the expiation of Æsop's sad catastrophe. In order, therefore, to avert the further consequences of the judgment, they erected a pompous monument over his bones. When the principals of Greece and the sages were informed of the melancholy end of Æsop, and by an examination of the facts had considered the injustice of his accusation, they were resolved to

revenge the wanton effusion of his innocent blood, which they did with the utmost severity.

Such are the statements of Maximus Planudes, the Greek monk. The above Fables, however, are certainly in the style of Æsop, and were, no doubt, addressed to the Samians and others; and there is every reason to think that he came to an untimely end. The Greek monk, though deficient in history and chronology, as appears from the inconsistency of his narrative, had, no doubt, some foundation for many of his anecdotes. Had there been no monument erected over his bones at Delphos, it would have been contradicted by other historians. A statue to his memory was erected in Athens, which evidentlv appears as it came from the hand of the famous Lysippus.

SELECT FABLES.

CCIX.—THE JEALOUS COCK.

A cock hearing another crow at the very dawn of morning, and knowing it to be an hour sooner than he was wont to proclaim the rising of the sun, began to apprehend that there was an assignation between a rival and his favourite hen. His suspicions were confirmed by seeing all the hens quitting their roost and sallying forth. He was resolved to be on the watch, and immediately followed, but would not crow, that there might be no notice of his approach. He heard his supposed rival give the signal again, and to his mortification perceived his favourite on a high bank. Being resolved to take revenge, he got unawares behind her, and began to peck her with such fury, that both he and the hen rolled down the precipice.

The Application.—Of all the passions which distract and agitate the mind, none is so bad and rancorous as jealousy; which, though produced by frivolous causes, has generally a tendency. As,

——"Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs from Holy Writ."

Many are of opinion that none but weak and superstitious minds can harbour this unworthy passion. But Shakspeare, and other eminent writers, prove that the most brave and most meritorious may be subject to it. If jealousy be a weakness, so is love:—

"Attended on his throne by all his guards
Of furious wishes, fears, and nice suspicions."

If jealousy be blind, so is love, and some of our greatest heroes

have been bewildered by both. Jealousy arises from a nice feeling of honour, and may be justly deemed a weakness, as it makes fools of the wisest; it starts at shadows, and prevents the judgment from being properly exercised; it drives reason from her throne, and by rashness and impetuosity becomes absolute madness.

CCX.—THE SOW AND HER YOUNG ONES.

A sow that had several young ones wished to keep them all together, for fear of danger; but one of them was obstinate, and would ramble. In vain she endeavoured to keep it within the bounds of her habitation, for the obstinate thing took the first opportunity that presented, and gave her the slip. In this perambulation it was met by two beggars, who immediately seized it, and dressed it that night for supper.

The Application.—Obedience is due to parents, whose admonitions are always to their children's good. How often do they meet with disasters through not attending to their salutary advice! Many a son, for want of being dutiful, has become a disgrace to his parents, and many a daughter, through inattention to their precepts, has brought their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

CCXI.—THE SNUFF-BOX AND THE SPECTACLES.

A gentleman having finished his book, when he had taken a pinch of snuff, took off his spectacles, and laid them down beside the snuff-box. "Ah," cried the latter to the former, "I am a better assistant to my master than you, for I clear his head, and make him comprehend what he reads."—"Nonsense!" answered the spectacles, "he could not read at all only for my aid; you are for his amusement—a superfluity—that's all."

The Application.—The butts of company often assume more consequence, and deem themselves more witty and accomplished than any at the table; but they ought to know themselves; they ought to know that they are invited merely to entertain, and not to be entertained. Indeed, some render themselves the fiddle of a company by their antic manœuvres and ridiculous grimaces; and deeming themselves exceedingly brilliant, often exhaust the patience by secondhand jests, destitute of poignancy or humour.

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